

Migration, belonging and the 'place-based contract':

**The civic and political participation of Polish migrants in
Northern Ireland from a transnational perspective**

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Statement of originality

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Abstract

This research explores the civic and political participation of Polish migrants in Northern Ireland from a transnational perspective. Examining how migrants construct belonging at multiple scales, it emphasises the role of place in shaping their civic and political participation, attitudes and interests. Despite a significant body of work examining the experiences of Polish migrants in the UK, their civic and political participation remains under-explored. Moreover, given Northern Ireland's status as a relatively recent immigration destination, little is known about how migrants engage in politics and civil society in the region. Employing a mixed methods approach that entailed in-depth interviews, an online survey and ethnographic participant observation, this research elicits a range of insights regarding migrants' motivations for participation in civil society, in formal politics and in political parties. It also sheds light on the barriers to participation which they experience.

Drawing on Thomas's (2002) idea of a 'contract' as a means through which claims to citizenship are articulated, the research develops the idea of a 'place-based contract' to conceptualise how migrants construct belonging to civic and political communities, and how this shapes and facilitates their civic and political engagement. I argue that participation is facilitated by a sense of belonging to place which has legal, personal and societal dimensions, and which includes both practical and emotional elements. Highlighting how this process operates across multiple scales, I argue for the need to 'rescale the polity' in order to pay closer attention to how migrants form attachments to place at a scale 'below' the nation-state and how this facilitates engagement in different forms of civic and political activity. As such, the research urges that greater attention be paid to the geographical context in which politics is practised, as well as focusing on the interconnections between migration, political participation, citizenship, identity, belonging and place.

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List of abbreviations

A8 – Accession Eight

BES – British Election Study

BES - Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

BME – Black and Minority Ethnic

BOS – Bristol Online Survey

CAJ – Committee on the Administration of Justice

CEE - Central and Eastern Europe/European

CPANI – Commissioner for Public Appointments Northern Ireland

CWA – Chinese Welfare Association

DUP – Democratic Unionist Party

EMBES - Ethnic Minority British Election Study

ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages

ETUI – European Trade Union Institute

EU - European Union

GFA – Good Friday Agreement

GPNI – Green Party in Northern Ireland

ICTU – Irish Congress of Trade Unions

IRA – Irish Republican Army

MEP – Member of the European Parliament

MLA – Member of the Legislative Assembly

NI Assembly – Northern Ireland Assembly

NICEM – Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

NILT – Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey

NIO - Northern Ireland Office

NISMP – Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership

NISRA – Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

NSMC – North South Ministerial Council

OFMDFM – Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister

PIS – *Prawo I Sprawiedliwosc* (Law and Justice)

PO – *Platforma Obywaltelska* (Citizen’s Platform)

POS – Political Opportunity Structure

PSNI – Police Service of Northern Ireland

RDS – Respondent Driven Sampling

SDLP – Social Democratic and Labour Party

SLD – *Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej* (Democratic Left Alliance)

SIT – Social Identity Theory

STV – Single Transferable Vote

TUV – Traditional Unionist Voice

UKIP – UK Independence Party

UN – United Nations

USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

UUP – Ulster Unionist Party

WARN – West Belfast Anti-Racism Network

WRS – Worker’s Registration Scheme

WWF – World Wildlife Fund

WW1 – World War One

WW2 – World War Two

Chapter One: Introduction

When the EU expanded in 2004, the scale of emigration from the eight new Central and Eastern European (CEE) Member States was both unexpected and unprecedented (Favell, 2008:701). The largest of these countries, Poland, had a long-established relationship with the UK over many decades, through migrants who formed a government in exile in London during World War Two (WW2) and those who fled from the communist regime during the latter part of the 20th century (Burrell, 2006;2008;2009; Düvell and Garapich, 2011; Garapich, 2007a;2008). While these waves of emigration were partly politically driven, other forms of migration from Poland were also taking place prior to 2004, as the loosening of travel restrictions in the 1980s and 1990s led to Poles arriving on work permits, working irregularly or joining family members (Burrell, 2008; Düvell and Garapich, 2011:3; Garapich, 2016). Polish communities had been present in places such as London and Leicester for many years, but they attracted only a modest amount of research interest (e.g. Burrell, 2006; 2008). However, when Poland joined the EU, the arrival of more than half a million Poles to the UK (Pollard et al. 2008) became a significant focus of academic and public debate, both in their new places of residence and in their home country.

In light of the rapidly booming economy, and an underestimation of the numbers that would arrive, the UK was one of only three EU countries not to impose restrictions on the number of migrants coming from new Member States. Given staffing shortages in key sectors of the labour market, these predominantly young and well-educated migrants were viewed as a flexible, mobile and temporary labour force (Favell, 2008:703). Few initially saw their presence as permanent, but many of these migrants began to build lives and careers in the UK, enrolling their children in schools and settling down (Drinkwater and Garapich, 2015; Erdal and Lewicki, 2016; Parutis, 2011; Ryan et al. 2009; Ryan and Sales, 2013). In the oft-quoted words of Max Frisch 'we asked for workers but human beings came'. They were not just

workers, but people with families, friends and aspirations which were often tied to their new places of residence as well as their lives 'back home'.

Although immigration has been a hotly debated topic in British politics for decades (Anderson and Ruhs, 2010; Wills et al. 2010), the economic downturn in 2008 added a new impetus to the debate on migration and freedom of movement within the EU. The recession fuelled increasing anti-immigrant sentiment, prompting heated discussions about the impact of intra-EU migration on the economy and the longer-term settled workforce, as well as the impact of increasing migration on public services and so-called 'benefits tourism'¹. Throughout these debates, Poles and other EU migrants were portrayed as the objects of politics rather than as subjects with political agency, despite the fact that EU citizenship entails expanded political rights (Driver and Garapich, 2012a:4). The right to live and work in any of the Member States is commonly associated with EU citizenship, but the right to vote in the local and European elections of the host country is often overlooked (Ostrowska, 2012:5). The availability of new political rights signified an important shift in the status of Poles in the UK, transforming them from 'sheer migrants' into 'new EU citizens' (ibid.). As well as acquiring new political rights in the host country, they also retained voting rights in national elections in Poland. Nevertheless, they were still viewed primarily as workers rather than as political actors (Burrell, 2009:6; Garapich and Driver, 2012b; Ryan and Sales, 2013:93).

A significant body of research has studied the most recent wave of Polish migration to the UK from multiple angles. It has primarily focused on the economic dimensions of this migration, such as Polish migrants' positioning in and experiences of the UK labour market (see Drinkwater et al. 2009; Janta

¹ Prior to the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU in June 2016, David Cameron (the serving Prime Minister) initiated negotiations with the European Union with the aim of restricting EU migrants' access to benefits. This was prompted by the perception that EU migrants were attracted to the UK because of its more generous benefits system, despite a lack of evidence to support this claim.

et al. 2011; Parutis, 2011; Trevena, 2011). Studies have also examined integration processes (Luthra et al. 2014), exploring the relationships among Polish and other CEE migrants and with the longer-term settled community (Markova and Black, 2007; McDowell, 2009; Temple, 2011), as well as living standards, access to public services and the family dynamics of migration decisions (Ryan et al. 2009; Ryan and Sales, 2013). Despite the presence of this large body of work, the political participation of Polish migrants remains under-explored (White, 2016:15). Although some research has begun to address this (e.g. Driver and Garapich, 2012a; 2012b; Garapich, 2007a; 2009; Garapich and Parutis, 2009; Pietka-Nykaza et al. 2014), there remains considerable scope to explore both the formal and informal political engagement of Polish migrants and how their participation may vary in different regional and local contexts. Furthermore, studying this topic enables the intersections between place, migration and civic and political participation to be explored, along with the role of place in shaping migrants' opportunities and motivations for civic and political engagement.

Polish migration to new destinations: the case of Northern Ireland

Post-enlargement migration from Central and Eastern Europe can be distinguished from earlier waves of migration to the UK due to the dispersion of migrants across both rural and urban areas, whereas earlier migrant cohorts had tended to settle mainly in urban areas (Stenning and Dawley, 2009). As Burrell (2010:304) and Kempny (2010:18) both highlight, a significant proportion of research on Polish migration to the UK has been focused on London (e.g. Datta, 2009; Garapich 2008; 2012a; 2012b; Ryan et al., 2009). Often referred to as the epitome of the 'global city' (Simard and Jentsch, 2009:11), London's diversity and plethora of migrant groups has attracted significant research attention (e.g. Datta et al. 2007; Gidley, 2011; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011; Wills et al. 2010). However, as many cities and towns in the UK are now home to diverse populations they have also

become 'global' places, due to the increasing transnational flows of people, things and ideas which pass through them (White, 2011a:20). This highlights the importance of conducting research in parts of the UK where migration has been less studied.

Although there has been a large increase in the number of Poles coming to the UK from 2004 onwards, London and other regions of the UK have been home to substantial numbers of Polish migrants since WW2 (Garapich, 2007a;2008). In contrast, due to the violent conflict in its recent past and lack of employment opportunities, significant immigration to Northern Ireland only began during the 1990s (Russell, 2012:4). Initially this was relatively modest, but 2004 brought a significant increase in immigration from the A8² countries which had become new EU members (ibid.). Although only a handful of Polish citizens were living in Northern Ireland before 2004, they have now replaced the Chinese as the largest minority ethnic group (Svašek, 2009:129).

Migrants to Northern Ireland find themselves in 'a place marked by a history of sectarian violence' (Svašek, 2009:130). After several decades of conflict, the peace process has delivered relative peace and stability but the legacy of 'the Troubles'³ remains (Lysaght and Basten, 2003:224). This specific context makes it particularly interesting to examine the political participation of Polish migrants in Northern Ireland for several reasons. First, it contributes to empirical understanding of the dynamics of migration in a geographical

² 'A8' refers to the 8 Central and Eastern European countries which joined the EU in 2004: Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Estonia, and Slovenia.

³ The Troubles' (also known as 'the Conflict') refers to the period of civil unrest from 1968 to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. It is generally explained in relation to the different constitutional aspirations of the two main sections of the community. Many Catholics consider themselves to be Irish and are nationalist in political outlook, meaning that they would like to see the whole island of Ireland reunited (and independent of Britain). Many Protestants consider themselves to be British and are unionist in political outlook, meaning that they want Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom (UK) of Britain (England, Scotland, and Wales) and Northern Ireland.

location which has attracted limited research attention. Second, it offers opportunities to explore migrants' political participation in the context of a deeply divided society. Third, the presence of devolved government in Northern Ireland offers an interesting and important context to consider how migrants may construct belonging to different political communities at multiple scales: local, regional, national and European. Although EU migrants are not eligible to vote in UK parliamentary elections, they have the right to vote in the devolved assembly elections of Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland as well as the local and European Parliament elections.

Transnational political participation and the role of place

As well as identifying the importance of exploring migrants' experiences of political participation in their new country of residence, this research draws on work which emphasises the value of reconceptualising society as stretching beyond the nation-state (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004). Poles are immigrants to the UK, but they are also emigrants from Poland, and may retain ties to multiple political communities simultaneously (Baubock, 2010; Collyer, 2014; Waldinger and Duquette-Rury, 2016). In light of their EU citizenship, and facilitated by technological progress and the prevalence of cheap air fares, it is now much easier for Poles to maintain transnational connections, carry out family reunion strategies and move between their countries of origin and destination, especially in comparison to third country nationals (Ryan and Sales, 2013:93). This should be set in the context of a significant body of research on the transnational aspects of migrants' lives, which also encompasses transnational political engagement (Bermudez, 2010; Guarnizo, 2003; Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011, 2015; Ostergaard Nielsen, 2003). Research on Polish migrants' transnational activities has considered the use of communication technologies (Burrell, 2008; Metykova, 2010), the transnational aspects of family care-giving strategies (Ryan et al., 2009), and the social and economic

impact of sending remittances (Elrick, 2008). However, the political dimensions of Polish transnationalism are yet to be fully explored.

Earlier studies of transnationalism attracted criticism due to the lack of attention paid to the significance of place within these processes (see Gilmartin, 2008). As a result, more recent research has increasingly focused on the importance of place and locality for understanding the migration experience (e.g. Conradson and McKay, 2007; Ehrkamp, 2005; White, 2011a; 2011b). In particular, translocal perspectives may examine communities which are extended across several nation-states, but they also put a strong emphasis on locality as a source of identity and meaning for mobile people (Blunt, 2007:687; Brickell and Datta, 2011). The characteristics of particular towns and cities (both in the receiving country and the country of origin) may significantly influence decisions about migration destinations and length of stay (White, 2011b). In addition, as geographical research has long emphasised (Conradson and McKay, 2007:168; Ehrkamp, 2005:348; Massey, 1994:167; Massey, 2004:5), place plays an important role in shaping identities, including political identities and political interests (Jones et al. 2004).

In research on migrants' political participation, the concept of political opportunity structure has frequently been employed in order to draw attention to how different institutional arrangements and the characteristics of particular migrant groups may facilitate or constrain their political engagement (Ireland, 1994). However, this approach has failed to acknowledge the role that migrant agency and intra-group dynamics play in political mobilisation (Bousetta, 2000:229; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011; Però, 2008), as well as the importance of collective identifications and experiences in motivating people to engage in politics (Scuzzarello, 2015a). Consequently, I propose the development of a conceptual framework which recognises the role of place and migrants' multiple and overlapping identities as key for shaping their political engagement.

Positioning the research and its objectives

The broad aim of this research is to investigate the relationships between place, migration, and civic and political participation. It examines the ways in which migrants construct their belonging to multiple political communities and how this shapes their civic and political engagement. It also aims to address the lacunae in existing scholarship by exploring the civic and political participation of Polish migrants, an area which has received comparatively little research attention. Rather than viewing Polish migrants primarily as economic actors, it conceives of them as political actors with the potential to engage in both formal and informal politics at a range of scales. Furthermore, it focuses on the experiences of migrants in Northern Ireland, a place where long-standing ethno-nationalist divides have often overshadowed, and impacted upon, migrants' political agency and interests. Although migrants in Northern Ireland have been the focus of an increasing number of studies in recent years (Doyle and McAreavey, 2014; Geoghegan, 2010; McAreavey, 2012) little is known about their experiences of civic and political participation in the region.

The research is guided by the following objectives:

- 1) To investigate the ways and the extent to which Polish migrants in Northern Ireland participate in civil society and politics at different scales: locally, nationally and transnationally.
- 2) To examine how Polish migrants construct their belonging to and participation in multiple political communities, and the role which identity plays in this process.
- 3) To explore how place shapes political and civic engagement, and how this can contribute to conceptualisations of the relationship between migration, politics and place.

In line with these wider objectives, the research sets out to answer a number of more specific research questions, as outlined below. These can be divided into three main themes: Polish migrants' participation in civil society; Polish

migrants' voting practices in different types of elections; and Polish migrants' support for and involvement in political parties:

1) Polish migrants' participation in civil society

- How did participants engage in civil society before arrival in Northern Ireland, and what were their experiences like?
- In what ways and to what extent do they continue to participate in Polish civil society while living in Northern Ireland?
- How do they participate in civil society in Northern Ireland (through established organisations or setting up their own organisations)?
- What are the motivations for and barriers to participation in these different types of activities (and to what extent can they be considered as 'political' in nature)?
- How is their civic participation influenced by the characteristics of particular places, and their relationships to place?

2) Polish migrants' voting practices in different types of elections

- Did participants vote in Polish elections before emigrating, and what were their reasons for doing (or not doing) so?
- Have they voted in Polish elections since moving abroad, and what are their reasons for doing (or not doing) so?
- What are their attitudes towards voting in different types of elections in Northern Ireland (e.g. local, Northern Ireland Assembly, EU Parliament) and what have their experiences of voting been like?⁴
- How is their voting behaviour influenced by the characteristics of particular places, and their relationships to place?

⁴ EU migrants cannot vote in UK Parliament elections (with the exception of those from Ireland, Cyprus and Malta) unless they hold a British passport.

3) Polish migrants' support for and involvement in political parties

- Did participants support parties back in Poland, and have they continued to do so since emigrating? Which factors influence their political affiliations?
- If they vote in Northern Ireland, do they support particular parties and which factors influence their voting decisions?
- How do their political affiliations in Poland influence the political affiliations that they may develop in Northern Ireland?
- How are their political affiliations shaped by the characteristics of particular places, and their relationships to place?

In conjunction with outlining a range of empirical findings, the research puts forward specific conceptual contributions which have emerged. Drawing on Thomas's (2002) idea of a 'contract' as a means through which claims to citizenship are articulated, it develops the idea of a 'place-based contract' to conceptualise the ways in which migrants construct belonging to civic and political communities and how this shapes and facilitates their civic and political engagement. Although Polish migrants to Northern Ireland retain the right to vote in Polish national elections, whilst gaining the right to vote in local elections in Northern Ireland, the possession of these rights alone is not sufficient for their enactment. Instead, I argue that civic and political participation is facilitated by a sense of belonging to place which has legal, personal and societal dimensions, and which includes both practical and emotional elements. As such, it contributes to an emerging body of research which urges that greater attention be paid to the emotional dimensions of political engagement (Boccagni and Baldassar, 2015; Schurr, 2013) and the geographical context in which politics is practiced (Agnew, 1987; Johnston and Pattie, 2008).

Although the possession of political rights is determined by objective criteria, such as country of birth or legal citizenship, migrants' rationales for participation in both home and host country contexts are shaped through

their subjective relationships with place and their own understandings of what it means to belong to a particular political community. I will argue that they view their rights and duties of participation as part of a dynamic 'place-based contract' which is situated at multiple scales, and which is continuously being shaped and renegotiated in relation to their individual circumstances, interpersonal relationships and shifts in the wider political landscape. Moreover, the reconfiguration of identities which takes place within the migration experience may contribute to the development of new political views and affiliations, which in turn shapes the nature of migrants' civic and political engagements in different (and often multiple) places.

While much literature has focused on the importance of rights and institutions at the scale of the nation-state (e.g. Koopmans, 2004; Maxwell, 2012; Odmalm, 2004; Pirkkalainen et al. 2013), my research highlights the ways in which geographical context makes a very significant difference to the decisions made and actions taken by migrants. It also reinforces the importance of considering the places where migrants move from as well as where they move to (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007). With this in mind, it highlights the need to 'rescale the polity' in order to pay closer attention to how migrants form attachments to place at a scale 'below' the nation-state and how that facilitates engagement in different forms of civic and political activity.

Outline of the thesis

Chapter Two sets out the key debates which underpin the conceptual framework of the thesis. It draws on literature from a wide range of disciplines within the social sciences, whilst adopting a distinctly geographical perspective which analyses migrants' political participation through the lens of place. It comprises five main sections which address the key debates pertaining to the research topic and its objectives. These provide an overview of how place has been conceptualised and its relationship with

politics; definitions of and approaches to migrants' civic and political participation; delineating a transnational perspective on migrants' political practices; approaches to defining the boundaries of and modes of belonging to political communities; and conceptualisations of citizenship as both status and practice which are situated at multiple scales. I argue for a conceptual approach which recognises the importance of place, collective identities and migrant agency in shaping political engagement. As noted above, I also propose the notions of a 'place-based contract' in order to conceptualise the ways in which migrants' relationships to place influence their political engagement, and emphasise the need to 'rescale the polity' to recognise how political attachments and identities are formulated at scales other than the nation-state.

Chapter Three outlines the methodological framework which underpins the study, and locates it within wider methodological debates on migration, political participation and place. It sets out how the research methods (in-depth interviews, an online survey and ethnography) were employed and how sampling and participant recruitment were carried out. As well as detailing the nature of the research sites, it reflects on the ethical aspects and the challenges of carrying out the research, before discussing the analysis of the data and the plan for dissemination. I argue for the need to adopt a mixed methods approach in order to collect data which can shed light on different aspects of the research topic.

Drawing on existing academic research on migration to Northern Ireland, as well as policy documents and census and public opinion data, **Chapter Four** outlines the particular historical, social and political context in which the study was conducted. It sets out the history of conflict in Northern Ireland and how this shapes politics in the present. It then outlines the history of migration to Northern Ireland, along with the legislative and policy framework for protecting ethnic minority rights and facilitating the participation of minorities in civic and political life. Recognising the significance of political parties' attitudes in facilitating migrants'

participation in politics, it reviews recent party manifesto commitments regarding ethnic minority communities. In addition, it considers the history of civic and political participation in Poland as well as recent developments in the attitudes of the Polish state towards to the political participation of emigrants. I argue that it is important to have a detailed understanding of the research context in order to analyse the ways that place shapes and influences migrants' civic and political participation.

Chapter Five examines Polish migrants' participation in civil society, including their current involvement in Northern Ireland and their participation in Poland both prior to and post-migration. It investigates their motivations for participation and the barriers they experience, considering their involvement in host country organisations and more recently established Polish community organisations. The chapter explores how different aspects of belonging play a role in shaping and influencing Polish migrants' participation in civil society, both through their activities in Northern Ireland and those which are transnational in scope. It also illustrates how civic engagement enables migrants to build social relationships and develop a sense of attachment to place. The chapter goes on to illuminate the idea of the 'place-based contract' which helps to conceptualise how migrants conceive of and justify their claims to belonging and how this shapes their participation in civil society. As migrants' attachments are shaped in particular places and contexts, it is important to analyse this intersection of place, belonging and experience in shaping their membership in multiple political communities, and consider how this influences their civic and political engagement.

Chapter Six explores migrants' attitudes towards voting in both home and host country elections. It investigates the barriers to electoral participation as well as the factors which facilitate migrants' engagement. The chapter aims to clarify and extend Baubock's (2007;2008) idea of 'stakeholder citizenship' by recognising that emotional attachments and feelings of belonging are often an important driver of political participation, along with

purely practical considerations about the potential future benefits to be derived from such activity. It argues that although Polish migrants have the right to electoral participation in both home and host country elections (regardless of their future plans), their own understandings of what it means to be a citizen and their personal 'place-based contracts' also have an important role to play in their decisions about voting.

Continuing to view political engagement through a transnational lens, **Chapter Seven** focuses on the development of migrants' political views and affiliations in their home country and how these may shape and influence their support for political parties in Northern Ireland. It demonstrates the complex ways in which their political identities are shaped, with relationships to place playing a key role. Highlighting that political views are not shaped in a vacuum, it draws attention to the importance of the neighbourhood, community ties and social networks in developing migrants' political affiliations. In addition, the chapter considers migrants' experiences of involvement in political parties in Northern Ireland and the role of parties in reaching out to migrant communities.

Chapter Eight outlines the conclusions of the thesis through a summary of the research findings in relation to its main aims. It outlines how the concept of the 'place-based contract' (as developed throughout the research) has been illustrated in relation to the empirical findings on migrants' participation in civil society, engagement with formal politics and involvement with political parties. As the research demonstrates, relationships to place persist across distances and emotional ties to place can be just as strong as more tangible and practical ones. Although citizenship, as a formal status, denotes legal belonging to a polity, belonging extends beyond having legal rights to also incorporate the social and emotional elements of feeling part of a particular place. As well as suggesting some directions for future research, the chapter reflects on the consequences of the EU referendum for migrants' sense of belonging in the UK and how this may impact on their civic and political participation in the future.

Chapter Two: Migration, citizenship, politics and place: charting the landscape of existing work

The current research aims to explore the civic and political participation of Polish migrants to Northern Ireland, investigating how they construct belonging to multiple political communities and how place shapes their civic and political engagement. It conceives of belonging as a concept with multiple dimensions, including citizenship as a legal marker of belonging, belonging as negotiated through social relationships, and the subjective, personal aspects of belonging which may be associated with attachments to place (Antonisch, 2010). It also considers the role of identity in this process, recognising that people have multiple identities which are fluid and shift across place and time. By taking a transnational perspective, which views migrants' lives as stretching beyond the nation-state (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004), it aims to examine migrants' attachments to political communities at different scales, and in different places, and thus contribute to conceptualisations of the relationship between place, politics and migration. In developing a conceptual framework to address these aims, it is necessary to draw on literature from a range of disciplines within the social sciences, whilst adopting a distinctly geographical perspective which analyses political participation through the lens of place.

The chapter is divided into five sections. Firstly, I explore the concept of place within human geography and how its meaning has shifted in response to a series of critical interventions in the discipline. Although it has been argued that political organisation on the grounds of place is becoming less significant in the contemporary world, I posit that place still plays an important role in shaping political identities and interests. I argue that a critical approach to place is attentive to how it shapes opportunities and relationships whilst still recognising the role of human agency in making and re-making place, and thus allowing for the potential of social and political change.

Secondly, I outline how civic and political participation is to be defined for the purposes of this study, situating this within existing research on migrants' political engagement. I highlight the distinction between formal and informal political participation, arguing that the former has attracted less research interest in critical human geography and deserves closer attention. I note that the political opportunity structure approach has been an influential lens through which to analyse migrants' political participation. However, I highlight the importance of recognising how migrant agency, collective identities (beyond the co-ethnic or co-national) and relationships to place also play a role in shaping migrants' civic and political engagement. I emphasise the need to take a more open-ended approach to understanding migrants' identification processes, looking beyond relationships with co-nationals/co-ethnics to analyse inter-group dynamics and other identities which may be salient for particular individuals.

Thirdly, I situate my research within a significant body of work on migrants' transnational practices. This provides a useful lens through which to analyse how migrants construct civic and political identities with multiple reference points, and how they may claim the right to participate in more than one political community. I highlight that ties to place or to a 'homeland' can be emotional as well as practical, and argue for a greater focus on how these emotional dimensions can shape civic and political participation in different places over time.

Fourthly, I argue for the need to analyse both the personal and the social dimensions of belonging in order to understand migrants' motivations for political participation. Building on and adapting a typology outlined by Thomas (2002), I propose the concept of a 'place-based contract' in order to conceptualise how migrants develop relationships with place and how this shapes their civic and political engagement. I highlight the role of social interactions in exercising citizenship, emphasising that migrants do not exist in a vacuum and that the response of the receiving society also has an impact on their ability to exercise their rights. Arguing against perspectives which

view 'active citizenship' as a mode of governmentality rather than involving political subjects with agency, I urge that greater attention be paid to migrants' engagement in 'routine' civic and political activities.

Finally, I consider the ways in which citizenship has been resituated at multiple scales. Whilst acknowledging that the nation-state is no longer the sole bearer of citizenship authority, I argue that the state remains a significant actor, although new forms of citizenship are emerging both above and below the state. I examine how citizenship as a form of legal belonging to a nation-state has been challenged due to increasing international migration, adding impetus to the debate on how the boundaries of a political community are to be defined. Outlining Baubock's (2007; 2008) 'stakeholder principle', I argue that this concept could be strengthened by reflecting on both the practical and emotional dimensions of belonging to political communities, and informed by greater empirical understanding of migrants' experiences. I also emphasise the need to 'rescale the polity' in order to pay closer attention to how migrants form attachments to place at a scale 'below' the nation-state and how this facilitates their civic and political engagement.

Changing configurations of place, community and political engagement

Place is a core concept in human geography, but its meaning has shifted in response to developments in the discipline. Geographers have always been concerned with studying the characteristics of particular places, but the humanistic and critical turns during the 1970s and the 1980s fostered efforts to interrogate place as a concept (Cresswell, 2008:135). In this regard, place can be understood as 'a meaningful segment of geographical space' which may be considered at multiple scales, from the micro-social to the global (Cresswell, 2008:134). While humanistic geographers urged us to explore individuals' subjective experiences of and attachments to place, emerging critical approaches (such as Marxism) argued for the importance of studying the connections between places and how the development of phenomena

such as globalisation and capitalism influence their character (Castree, 2009:158; Harvey, 1993:4).

Agnew (1987:5-6) sets out a tripartite definition of place which aims to distinguish between three key dimensions. First, 'locale' refers to the 'microsociological' dimension of place or the routine settings where people's everyday lives are lived. Second, 'location' focuses on the macro-level aspects of place such as the relationships between places and their location in 'wider networks of places'. Thus, it refers to the point where places are positioned in geographical space, which is close to the use of the term 'location' in common parlance (ibid. p. 5). Third, 'sense of place' refers to the subjective feelings and experiences which are produced through attachments to place and how these intersect with understandings of the self or identity (ibid. p. 6). This approach is a helpful starting point for understanding the multiple dimensions of place and their connections to political practice.

Relationships to places play a key role in identity formation, as identities are shaped through our interactions with the world (Antonisch, 2010; Conradson and McKay, 2007:167; Keith and Pile, 1993; Massey, 2004:5; Silvey, 2006). Places are not simply containers within which identities are formulated, but people also 'make place' and leave their own mark on the surrounding environment (Ehrkamp, 2005:348; White, 2011b:24). This does not only occur in a material sense, through the physical alteration of town and cityscapes, but it is also present in the meaning that people attribute to places, and the subjective senses of place experienced both by migrant groups and longer-term settled residents (Blunt and Bonnerjee, 2013; Çağlar and Glick Schiller, 2010; Ehrkamp, 2005).

As the world has become increasingly economically and politically interconnected, and international flows of people, ideas and capital have multiplied, the idea of 'place' has undergone further reconceptualization. Globalisation has made it more difficult to view places as discrete and bounded entities, as cities and towns around the world have been subject to

its homogenising effects (Castree, 2009:154; Cresswell, 2004:8). These changes have been accompanied by a shift in geographical thinking towards conceiving of places as 'nodes in spaces of flows' (Wills, 2013:136). Such perspectives do not understand places as fixed and territorially bounded, but rather view them as constantly shifting position within global networks (Amin, 2004).

In a well-known contribution to this debate, Doreen Massey (1994:146) sought to conceptualise the position of places within global networks without acquiescing to the idea that places had completely lost their unique character. As she highlights, the processes of globalisation do not produce same effects in every location, but interact with the local environment to create distinctive patterns of adaptation and resistance (Massey, 1994:160). Using the example of Kilburn in North London, she illustrates how it is situated within a complex web of economic, social and cultural relations but still retains a 'character of its own' (Massey, 1994:152). From this perspective, place can be understood as a 'meeting place' or the point at which particular economic, social and political relations converge (*ibid.*).

As understandings of place have been resituated within a global context, theories of community have also aimed to grasp the ways in which globalisation and increasing international migration have reconfigured the relationships between individuals. It has been widely argued that these processes have contributed to 'eroding the connections between people and places' (Wills, 2013:136). Place is not necessarily coterminous with community⁵, as communities are often stretched across space and places are usually home to several communities (Bermudez, 2010; Guarnizo, 2003; Massey, 1994; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011; Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Smith, 2005). Research has shown that although people still interact with those who live in close proximity to them, increasing numbers of close

⁵ It should be noted that the concept of 'community' is also a contested one (Alleyne, 2002).

personal relationships are maintained across significant geographical distances (Wills, 2012:116). Studies of community have been heavily influenced by Castells' concept of the 'network society' (Faist, 2013:1639). This approach emphasises the examination of processes and connections between individuals rather than the study of communities as 'discrete objects' (Cresswell, 2006:44).

Ash Amin (2006:1011) has argued that the modern city can be characterised as a 'site of extraordinary circulation and translocal connectivity' rather than as a place which is conducive to the building of community. The dispersion of communities across borders, and the observation that people live in close proximity to each other 'largely as strangers' (Amin, 2010:55) has led to the view that political organisation and activity based in place may be on decidedly shaky ground (Wills, 2013:137). In addition, it has been argued that political projects which attempt to equate place with community tend to draw on myths about the past and have led to 'defensive and reactionary responses', such as extreme forms of nationalism and hostility towards outsiders (Massey, 1994:147).

However, it is also important to recognise that places hold meaning for people and many human beings maintain significant attachments to localities (Massey, 1994:151; Tomaney, 2013:664). The view that attachments to place are necessarily exclusionary runs the risk of neglecting 'the complex ways in which people continue to live locally, albeit in altered ways' (Tomaney, 2013:660). Portrayals of 'unbridled' mobility may overemphasise the existence of 'flows' and 'hybridity' whilst ignoring the ways in which people are 'emplaced' and situated in various sets of social relations (Smith, 2005:238, see also Brickell and Datta, 2011). Smith (2005:236) argues that globalisation is generally portrayed as an inevitable structural-economic process which reduces people 'to isolated units of consciousness' rather than recognising them 'socially and spatially situated subjects'.

The widespread use of the internet and forms of social media has resulted in the prevalence of new forms of interpersonal and political communication which do not rely on face-to-face relationships (Bennett, 2012; Madianou and Miller, 2012). However, whilst acknowledging that globalisation and increasing mobility have led to profound changes in society and in the nature of community, Wills (2013:136) emphasises the importance of recognising that people still live in places, and that place-based relationships are still an important foundation for political organisation. Drawing on her research with London Citizens, she highlights that it is possible to make significant political gains by organising and connecting people and institutions 'on the basis of shared geography' (ibid.).

People still depend on the public services provided in their local communities, and forming coalitions around these common local interests can be an effective way of achieving change from the ground up (Wills, 2013:136). As electoral geographers have emphasised, votes are cast in specific places for representatives who will represent constituents living within in a particular bounded territory (Johnston and Pattie, 2008:357; Wills, 2013:136). Therefore, whilst acknowledging that political power is located at a variety of scales, it is still relevant to engage with elected representatives on issues which affect people living within a specific geographical area.

Electoral geography has explored the ways in which the characteristics of particular places (such the nature of the local economy, relationships between different cultural groups and the relationship between religious organisations and the state) may influence support for particular political parties (Pattie and Johnston, 2008:362). When support for a particular party becomes cemented in a certain area, it can become 'part of the local culture' and constitute a base for increasing support and winning over increasing numbers of voters (ibid. p. 365). Although the characteristics of a place can help to predict voting patterns, this is not to say that place functions as a

fixed independent variable from which a causal relationship between place and politics can be derived.

Agnew (1987:ix) argues for a conception of place which recognises that it plays 'a causal role in shaping context specific political processes', but this relies on place being understood, first and foremost, as a process. A critical approach to place, which views it as 'not simply fixed and objective but also as subjective and practiced' (Phillips and Robinson, 2015:410) allows us to account for the role of human agency in making and re-making place, and therefore also to account for the potential of social and political change. It is important to explore how demographic shifts and changes in migration patterns, along with the reconfigurations of political communities at different scales, can have an impact on the presence or absence of different types of political activities in particular places. Whilst acknowledging the usefulness of a network approach in both conceptualising and facilitating new forms of communication and political connectivity, my research aims to explore the ways in which Polish migrants construct belonging in different political communities, and the role of place in shaping their political engagement.

Delineating migrants' civic and political participation

Defining 'politics' is a contested matter, but it can broadly be described as the process through which 'society shapes what it considers to be important questions for the community' (Huysmans, 2005:6). It is a collective pursuit, rather than an activity which can be carried out by individuals in isolation, and the contestation of power and values is a crucial element (ibid. p. 39). In a democracy, citizens, interest groups and social movements all have the ability to participate in politics, along with politicians and others engaged in more formal structures of governance, such as judges and civil servants (ibid. p. 29). Politics can also take place in a range of domains, within formal political institutions (ranging from the local to the supranational) and outside of them (ibid. p.32).

The prevailing trend in post-war political science was to understand political participation solely in terms of electoral politics, referring to acts such as voting or standing for election (Kriesi, 2008:147). However, influential scholarship during the 1970s led to the wider reframing of the concept to include types of non-electoral political activity (ibid.). Voting and party membership tend to be understood as participation in formal politics, whereas other activities (such as protesting, boycotting, striking or signing petitions) are described as non-formal or 'extra-parliamentary' forms of participation (Ekman and Amna, 2012:289).

Over the last few decades, academic interest in rates of political participation has continued to grow, as many established democracies have reported declining levels of voter turnout and a lack of confidence in political institutions (Ekman and Amna, 2012:283; Pattie and Johnston, 2013:178). It has been argued that the impact of the financial crisis and high levels of youth unemployment have led to a perceived apathy towards politics which is reflected in low voter turnout at elections among young people in Europe today (Bogumil, 2012:125). However, it should be noted that political participation can take many different forms beyond voting, and it may also manifest itself through a critical attitude to the way in which politics is conducted (ibid. p. 132, Norris, 2011). It should also be highlighted that the decline of interest in voting has been accompanied by an increase in alternative forms of participation, such as boycotting and protesting (Raney and Berdahl, 2009:187).

A distinction can also be drawn between formal political participation (such as voting and political party membership) and participation in civil society (such as involvement with community organisations, human-rights groups, NGOs and religious organisations) (McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011:1501). Civil society can be broadly defined as 'the totality of social institutions and associations, formal as well as informal, that are not strictly orientated towards production, and are not governmental or familial in character' (Odmalm, 2004:472). Scholars have debated the degree to which a well-

developed civil society can help to promote democracy (Odmalm, 2004; McIlwaine, 2007). Liberal democratic approaches tend to depict civil society as an 'autonomous arena of liberty' which provides a link between the individual and the state and is a means through which citizens' interests can be expressed in the public sphere (McIlwaine, 2007:1256). However, Gramscian or post-Marxist approaches draw attention to the internal divisions within civil society and the struggle between competing viewpoints to claim the dominant narrative (ibid. p. 1257). Therefore, a link between civil society development and democracy-building cannot be automatically assumed (ibid). Nevertheless, as the activities of civil society organisations often aim to influence the behaviour of the state, there is significant potential for involvement in politics and civil society to overlap (McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011:1501). Consequently, my research considers civil society as a site where contestations of values and political projects are also likely to emerge. While civil society refers to the networks of organisations which facilitate participation in the public sphere, civic participation refers more specifically to the activities that people take part in (such as raising money for charity, campaigning or volunteering) (Ebert and Okamoto, 2013:1269). Putnam (1995) understands civic participation as encompassing a broad range of involvement in associational life, including membership of religious groups, sports clubs and music societies. He argues that involvement in associations builds social capital (understood as social networks, norms and trust) which is linked to higher rates of participation in electoral politics (ibid.). In accordance with this, my research recognises that membership of associations (such as choirs or sports clubs) may support people to develop social relationships and social capital. In turn, this may facilitate their further involvement in civil society organisations and formal politics.

However, this thesis defines 'civic participation' more narrowly than Putnam, viewing it primarily as 'the voluntary actions of people working together to solve problems' (Ebert and Okamoto, 2013:1267). Although attending an exercise class or a religious service may be a precursor to civic participation, I view civic participation as involvement in collective action to shape or change the situation of a

particular group or of wider society. Such activities may vary in their aims and scope, such as volunteering with local organisations, raising awareness about the issues affecting certain groups or raising money for charity. However, the defining feature of civic participation is that it involves people aiming to to effect change that will benefit a wider group of people, rather than merely participating in recreational activities for their own personal benefit. Whilst recognising that the domains of 'political' activity may resist a priori boundary-drawing, my research aims to address the relative neglect of the study of participation in formal political processes within critical human geography. The lack of focus on 'ordinary politics' can be partly attributed to the influence of particular strands of poststructuralist political theory which aims to distinguish 'politics' from 'the political' (Barnett, 2008:1637). For example, Mouffe (2005) argues that antagonism (rather than consensus) is the essence of the political, and that the emergence of governance by a 'technocratic elite' signals a move towards a 'post-political' era. However, these approaches cast 'ordinary politics' as 'the scene of forgetting or diminution of genuine political energy', setting the the basis for a research programme which 'looks for democracy in certain places and *not* others' (Barnett, 2008:1638). These approaches neglect 'the sites and procedures of ordinary democratic politics, such as elections, parties or parliamentary procedures' thus focusing on 'one aspect (agonistic contestation) over other dimensions which seem just as important, like accommodation, negotiation, or bargaining' (ibid.).

Regarding engagement in electoral politics, there is a significant body of research on the electoral participation of ethnic minorities in British politics, which tends to focus on established Black and Asian minority communities rather than on first generation migrants (e.g. O'Toole and Gale, 2010; Sanders et al., 2014; Sobolewska et al. 2015). Although aspects of this literature may be useful in understanding the factors which can shape voting practices (such as how the experience of discrimination shapes attitudes towards politics), the experiences of recent migrants to the UK are likely to be somewhat different from those of settled ethnic minorities. Consequently, it is useful to

consider theories of political participation and mobilisation which focus more directly on the experiences of recent migrants to Europe.

A significant body of work has focused on the political participation of migrants in their new countries of residence (e.g. Fennema and Tillie, 1999; Ebert and Okamoto, 2013; Jacobs et al. 2004; Jones-Correa, 1998; Koopmans, 2004; Tillie, 2004). This research has highlighted that new patterns of migration are accompanied by new forms of political, social and cultural mobilization, the shape of which is influenced by the nature of a migrant's legal status to remain in the host country and the particular social, economic and political contexts in which they find themselves (Però and Solomos, 2010:2). Prior to the 1980s, in a period when Western Europe was experiencing an 'era of collective action', many migrant workers to the UK joined campaigns for workers' and material rights (ibid. p. 3). During the 1980s and 1990s, migrants who had secured British citizenship began to mobilize around issues such as racism and discrimination, lack of political representation and cultural rights (ibid. p. 4). During the last two decades, the arrival of migrants to Europe who did not hold citizenship, and were in some cases undocumented, produced a climate of vulnerability where human rights abuses were commonplace. This led to campaigns for regularization in several EU Member States, such as the 'Sans-papier' movement in France, the 'Sin Papeles' in Spain and the 'Strangers into Citizens' campaign in the UK (Dikec, 2012:78; Però and Solomos 2010:5; Wills et al. 2009:447).

In his study of immigrant political participation in France and Switzerland, Ireland (1994) identifies three key factors which motivated immigrants in post-WW2 Western Europe to become politically engaged. These were the movement from temporary to permanent settlement (as these migrants were initially viewed as temporary workers); the rise in discrimination, racism and xenophobia (which he links partly to the economic crisis of the 1970s and the failure to mitigate the social and political effects of the large-scale recruitment of migrant workers); and the lack of government progress in improving immigrants' socio-economic position and socio-political

empowerment (Ireland, 1994:5). Although there is a broad consensus on the factors which motivated these immigrant populations to become politically engaged, there is a lack of agreement on the factors which influenced the types of participation they engaged in and the response this engendered from local and national institutions (ibid.). From the wider literature, Ireland identifies three broad groups of theories which aim to explain the ways in which migrants have mobilised and how their participation has been shaped (for an approach which draws on this see Odmalm, 2004:474).

The first of these is 'the class theory' which posits that 'the immigrants' common class identity determines the nature of their participation' (Ireland, 1994:6). As immigrants to Western Europe were concentrated primarily in low-skilled, low-paid work, this led to a stratification of the workplace where migrants form 'ethnic/racial sub-proletariats' (ibid.). From this point of view, both employers and the state have been complicit in dividing the working class into foreign and indigenous elements, which makes it easier 'to impose on both the costs of industrial reconstruction' (ibid.). In such cases, the response of working class movements in the receiving society (such as trade unions and left-wing political parties) also plays an important role in shaping the type of mobilisation which occurs (ibid.).

The second group of approaches is based on the ethnicity/race theory, which assumes that immigrants' ethnic identity is of foremost significance and leads to the predominance of ethnic politics (Ireland, 1994:7). This point of view assumes that migrants will 'organise and articulate their political interests along ethnic or racial lines', as their particular form of political participation develops 'from group socialisation processes and in response to discrimination' (ibid; see also Lafleur and Sanchez-Dominguez, 2014:5). This approach also emphasises the relevance of immigrants' previous experiences in their homeland and how this may shape their participation in the host country. According to this theory, migrants with a shared nationality or background will engage in similar types of participation (Ireland, 1994:8).

As Ireland (1994:8) highlights, these two perspectives were at the forefront of earlier studies of immigrants' political behaviour. However, his work is based on foregrounding the relevance of a third approach, which has been widely drawn upon in order to help explain how the migrants' political participation may vary in different contexts (see Bousetta, 2000). The political opportunity structure approach (POS) posits that the degree to which migrants participate in politics is influenced by the particular political and institutional environment of the host country (Ireland, 1994; see also Driver and Garapich, 2012a:5). A similar approach has also been used to analyse the development of social movements and other forms of political mobilisation (McAdam et al. 1996; Meyer and Minkoff, 2004; Tarrow, 1996). Following this line of thought, the factors which may impact on migrant political participation include the type of political system in operation, the rights in place for minority groups and the state's legal structure for citizenship and nationality. Public and government attitudes towards immigration may also have an influence on creating an environment where migrants can participate politically (Driver and Garapich, 2012a:5).

In addition, the POS approach considers how the characteristics of particular migrant groups intersect with political and institutional factors to create the conditions for political participation (Driver and Garapich, 2012a:5). Relevant factors include levels of economic and social capital, including the capacity to communicate in the national language and access information, and the size of the migrant group (ibid; Odum, 2004; Scuzzarello, 2015a). The resources in place to mobilise migrants, for example migrant organisations and associations, can also have an impact, along with the nature and the gravity of the challenges faced (ibid; see also Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011).

Driver and Garapich (2012a:5) argue that according to the POS approach, A8 migrants are fairly well placed to participate in UK politics. The right to work and access social security, combined with voting rights and a legal framework which protects the rights of minorities, creates a structural

environment which is favourable to their political involvement (ibid.). Polish migrants in particular have been identified as a group which possesses a high degree of social capital and high levels of education, although this is not always reflected by the low-skilled work in which they are often engaged. However, qualitative data collected on the attitudes of Polish, Czech, Slovak and Lithuanian citizens towards voting in the 2012 London elections suggested that they are not particularly engaged with UK politics, at least when it comes to exercising their voting rights (Driver and Garapich (2012a;2012b). Referring to studies of Eastern European migrants in several London boroughs (Garapich, 2007b; Garapich and Parutis, 2009a, Garapich, 2009), it was noted that although awareness of voting rights was generally quite high (i.e. 78% in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham) levels of voter registration and the intention to vote were much lower (i.e. 35% in the same borough) (Driver and Garapich, 2012a:9).

In focus group discussions with participants who claimed to have a basic interest in politics, a number of explanations were given. Of the participants who said that they intended to vote, reasons included a 'sense of civic duty' and as 'proof of their integration into British society'. Those who said that they would not vote explained that they lacked knowledge about the candidates and party policies, or expressed the idea that migrants were too busy with work to get involved with politics (Driver and Garapich, 2012a:9). The findings also highlighted that the participants had a substantial knowledge of politics in general, but that much of this was focused on politics in Poland and in other Central and Eastern European countries (Driver and Garapich, 2012a:10).

In addition, the research indicated that experiences of political corruption and undemocratic governments have made some Polish migrants suspicious of the role of the state and less inclined to get involved in political activity (Driver and Garapich, 2012a:10). This was echoed in research which found that negative attitudes toward prospects and career opportunities in Poland were often linked to pessimism about Polish politics (White, 2011b:7).

However, participants also expressed the idea that UK politics was different from politics in their home country, as they generally viewed the UK as a well-functioning democracy (Driver and Garapich, 2012a:11). Interestingly, rather than this acting as an encouragement to become more involved in politics, one participant said that this was a 'demotivating' factor as there was no need for them to contribute to what was already working well (ibid.).

These findings highlight the importance of looking beyond structures to also explore migrants' political views and activities in more depth. As Bousetta (2000:229) argues, the POS approach places too much emphasis on the role of formal institutions in influencing political behaviour while failing to acknowledge the diversity of migrant groups and the specificity of intergroup dynamics (see also McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011; Però, 2008; Werbner, 2002). Whilst advocating the importance of considering the role of institutions, Bousetta (2000:232) emphasises that migrants' political participation should not be analysed solely in relation to 'a unified causal force' such as the POS. As such, the POS approach risks depicting migrants as 'passive' individuals whose agency plays no role in their political engagement (ibid. p. 235).

Indeed, while much research has focused on Polish migrants as a distinct group (e.g. Bell and Erdal, 2015; Bielawska, 2012; Botterill, 2011; Burrell, 2008; 2009; 2010; Düvell and Garapich, 2011; Eade et al. 2007; Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010; Kempny 2010; 2013; Okólski and Salt, 2014) it has also aimed to highlight the diversity which exists within the group and the fact that co-nationals may not always share a common outlook. For example, Garapich's (2007b:7) work on Poles in London has outlined the divisions between different generational cohorts, in particular those deemed to have left Poland for 'political' reasons (mainly prior to 1990) and those who left for 'economic' reasons (mainly post-2004). In the research on Polish migration which emerged post-2004, the sense of fragmentation within this cohort is often commented upon (Eade et al. 2006; Pietka, 2011; Ryan et al. 2008; Svašek, 2009); and it should not be assumed that Poles form a coherent

‘community’ in an unproblematic sense (Gill, 2010:1165). In migration studies more widely, the ‘ethnic lens’ has also been critiqued and rejected in favour of an approach which examines migrants’ attitudes, behaviours, beliefs and identifications without prior assumptions of convergence between co-ethnics or co-nationals (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2009:184).

However, while the homogeneity of the group cannot be assumed, it should also be acknowledged that migrants often seek to form relationships with their co-ethnic or co-nationals, and that national or ethnic identity remains a strong source of identification for many after leaving the home country (Mercer and Page, 2010; Juul, 2011;2014). With this in mind, it remains valuable to study particular co-ethnic or co-national groups whilst also noting the complex and multi-faceted nature of identity, and how this may shape migrants’ civic and political activity in different ways. While my research does not seek to treat Poles in Northern Ireland as a single homogeneous entity, it recognises that co-national relationships may have an impact on migrants’ experiences of both everyday life and political organisation.

As well as recognising inter-group diversity and the role of migrant agency, it is important to be sensitive to the specific contexts in which political participation takes place, including the role of organisations and informal institutions in the analysis. Political engagement requires both ‘the mobilisation of a collective actor and the construction of an identity’ as well as a favourable social and political environment (Bousetta, 2000:235). Research on collective action has demonstrated that it can be motivated by a strong attachment to a social identity which is nurtured through networks of personal contacts who share the same beliefs (Kelly, 1998:34; Wills, 2009). Studies of social movements have shown how social networks have the capacity to enable collective action while also being produced by it (Della Porta and Diani, 2006:115). In addition, research into young people’s participation in unions has also shown that ‘belonging to a community’ and ‘gaining new social relations’ were key motives for their engagement

(Hansen, 2004:134). Consequently, it is necessary to pay closer attention to the ways in which social and political identities are formulated in order to explore migrants' constructions of belonging to political communities.

Identity is a key concept in the social sciences and it has been examined in multiple ways across different disciplines. The understanding of identity as the 'fixed' or innate essence of an individual (which emerged from the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the work of scholars such as Descartes and Locke) was critiqued by subsequent work in sociology (such as the symbolic interactionism of G.H. Mead) which conceptualised identity as situated within and constitutive of wider social relations (Dubow, 2009:364). Identities are 'social arrangements' which are constructed through people's 'shared stories about who they are, how they are connected, and what has happened to them' (Tilly, 2003:608). They are shaped by participation in social life at a range of scales, from the level of the individual and the household to the nation-state and beyond (ibid.). Analysing identity formation is not just about understanding individuals' innate sense of self, but it requires a focus on how people come to view themselves as part of particular groups and how this has influenced political struggles and social change (ibid. p. 619).

Social Identity Theory (SIT) proposes that there is a distinction between personal and social identity, and that social identity is primarily based on group memberships. It posits that human beings are naturally a 'pattern-recognition' species and that the categorisation of people into 'in-groups' and 'out-groups' is the process through which they understand their place in the social world. People aim to achieve or maintain a positive social identity (which increases self-esteem) and that this positive group identity derives mainly from 'favourable comparisons between the in-group and relevant out-groups (Brown, 2000:747). For example, British people may compare themselves favourably with the French, or the Americans, as a way of enhancing their own group self-esteem. Salient 'in-groups' may include families, professions or sports teams, as well as local, regional, or national

political or religious communities, depending on how a person self-identifies. People have multiple identities and the strength of these identities shifts depending on the particular situation (Cuhadar and Dayton, 2011:274).

Although this theory provides a useful framework for thinking about the relational formation of group identities, we must also beware of 'reifying social categories and identities... and drawing boundaries between the in- and out-groups which have little bearing in the real, contested, life of social identity formation' (Scuzzarello, 2015a:182). Essentialist conceptions which link identities to 'assumedly homogeneous national states or roots' fail to recognise the heterogeneous nature of states themselves, and how identities are shifting and fluid rather than fixed in their nature (Ghorashi, 2004: 330). As a result, approaches have emerged which aim to better capture the complexities of social life by employing ethnographic methods and in-depth qualitative analyses. Intersectional perspectives have also contributed to this effort by analysing how different aspects of identity co-constitute rather than sit alongside each other, and how this intersects to produce different forms of oppression (Crenshaw, 1991, cited by Bastia, 2014:238). This approach has also been employed within migration studies in order to highlight intra-group differences. For example, McIlwaine and Bermudez's (2011) research on the political and civic participation of Colombians in London analyses how gender and class shape migrants' patterns of engagement both in the receiving society and transnationally. This demonstrates how other aspects of migrants' identities (aside from their ethnicity or nationality) play a role in shaping their group affiliations (see also Wills et al. 2010).

Whilst drawing on the political opportunity structure approach, Scuzzarello (2015a:1215) combines it with approaches which emphasise the importance of collective identifications in motivating political engagement. Focusing on the participation of migrants in local elections, she argues that political structures are not the sole aspect influencing migrants' participation and we also need to consider the role of identification with both the 'in-group' (which she perceives as the co-ethnic/co-national group) and the receiving society

(ibid:1216). She argues that identification with the host society fosters a 'perception of entitlement' among migrants that may help to support participation (ibid.)

Scuzzarello's (2015a) research can be considered in relation to previous work which has emphasised the links between the social capital garnered through involvement in associational life and the political participation of migrants (Fennema and Tillie, 1999). However, as Jacobs and Tillie (2004) point out, a weakness of this work is its failure to account for the influence of cross-cultural social capital (or bridging capital) on political participation in the host society, as it focuses only on the forms of social capital generated through involvement in 'ethnic' organisations. Therefore, Scuzzarello's (2015a) work is an important step in that it also considers migrants' ties with the host community and involvement in other types of 'associational life' beyond ethnic organisations, and acknowledges that migrants are situated in a wider context beyond associating only with other migrants or other members of their ethnic group.

Scuzzarello (2015a) argues that in order to feel a sense of belonging which motivates participation in the political affairs of the host country, it is necessary to feel a sense of affiliation to the nation-state (i.e. she argues that Poles in the UK who describe themselves as both Polish and British are more likely to engage in local politics). In contrast, my research explores the salience of identities at different scales (including the local) in motivating engagement in civic and political activity. I propose taking a more open-ended approach to understanding migrants' identification processes, looking beyond their relationships with co-nationals/co-ethnics to analyse inter-group dynamics and other salient identities which may shape their civic and political activity.

Politics beyond borders: examining transnational political practices of migrants

Over the last few decades, a significant body of literature has focused on the transnational aspects of migrants' experiences and lifestyles (e.g. Burrell, 2008; Ehrkamp, 2005; Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004; Metykova, 2010; Ryan et al. 2009). The initial hypothesis, particularly prevalent in US studies of migration, was that migrants would have to abandon ties with their home countries, cultures and traditions in order to integrate successfully in the host country. However, it has now been recognised that some migrants remain strongly attached to their home countries and that these attachments are not necessarily incompatible with integration into the host society (Boccagni, 2011:90; Ehrkamp, 2005:346; Guarnizo, 2003; Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007:130; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011:1500). Therefore, in order to understand international migration and the lives of migrants, it is necessary to reconceptualise society as stretching beyond the nation-state (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004:1002).

Transnationalism was originally described as 'the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement' (Basch et al. 1994:6). More recent research has emphasised that transnational spaces are 'multi-layered and multi-sited'; stretching beyond the host and home countries to include other locations around the world and linking together those who have ties to a shared nationality, religion or culture (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007:131). Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004:1009) develop the concept of 'transnational social fields' as sites in which practices, resources and ideas are exchanged through 'a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships'. They also draw a distinction between transnational 'ways of being' and 'ways of belonging'. 'Ways of being' refer to engagement in cross-border practices (for example, sending remittances or voting in home country elections) whereas 'ways of belonging' refer to the means by which migrants stake out their identities and attachments to a particular group (for example, flying a flag or

wearing religious symbols) (see also Bell and Erdal, 2015:79). As migrants negotiate their identities via ties to multiple places, my research explores how they construct civic and political identities with these multiple reference points, and how this shapes their civic and political activity.

Migrants have engaged in cross-border practices for decades, therefore transnational ties themselves are nothing new (Levitt, 2001). However, scholars have argued that globalisation and technological developments have facilitated the conduct of transnational practices with a higher degree of sustainability and intensity, making transnationalism a useful 'research lens' through which to analyse these developments (Martinello and Lafleur, 2008:650, see also Çağlar, 2001). Portes (2003:876) has cautioned against over-emphasising the transnational aspects of migrants' lives, as his research suggests that only small numbers of migrants are regularly engaged in transnational practices. Nevertheless, they always have the potential to engage in such practices due to their constant positioning within the transnational social field (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004:1010).

Furthermore, participation in transnational practices may not stay constant over time but may 'ebb and flow in response to particular incidents or crises' such as elections or catastrophes (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004:1010). Despite this, it should be highlighted that migrants are not transnational 'by nature' and research should focus on investigating the transnational practices of individuals rather than assuming the a priori existence of transnational 'communities' (Martinello and Lafleur, 2008:651). Whilst it is important to recognise that people are always embedded within social relationships, essentialising the idea of 'transnational communities' risks ignoring inter- and intra-group diversity and how the frequency and type of transnational activities may vary within the group (ibid.).

It has been highlighted that the concept of transnationalism has much in common with the longer-established notion of diaspora (Martinello and Lafleur, 2008:650). In its broadest sense, 'diaspora' can be understood as a

‘scattering of people over space and transnational connections between people and places’ (Blunt, 2009:158). Initially used to describe the relationship of Jews to an ancestral homeland, it has since been applied to many more migrant groups including refugees and guest workers (Cohen, 1997; Vertovec, 2009:132). This led to criticisms that the concept had been stretched too far at the expense of its analytical usefulness (Brubaker, 2005:3). However, rather than viewing diasporas simply as groups of migrants with ties to a homeland, it is perhaps more fruitful to conceive of them as ‘socially constructed through discourse and representation’ (Van Gorp and Smets, 2015:73). As well as avoiding the problem of ‘groupism’ (assuming that diaspora groups have a fixed ‘essence’ or are homogeneous in their composition), this perspective allows us to focus on how the notion of diaspora is used ‘to make claims, to articulate projects, to formulate expectations, to mobilise energies and to appeal to loyalties’ (Brubaker, 2005:12). As a result, Brubaker (2005:13) recommends focusing on ‘diasporic stances, projects, claims, idioms, practices, and so on’ rather than diaspora as a ‘bounded group’ (see also King, 2012:146).

Diaspora can therefore be understood as the means through which collective identities are shaped and mobilised, which may (but not necessarily) involve drawing on their position within multiple transnational networks. For example, while Polish community organisations may be referred to as ‘diaspora organisations’ due to their role in bringing Polish nationals together around a shared identity, all Poles living abroad are not automatically part of ‘the diaspora’. While diaspora refers to a sense of collective consciousness and shared identity, transnationalism refers to the tangible cross-border exchanges of resources, money and information, alongside travel and communication, in which migrants may engage (Vertovec, 2009:137). As Vertovec (2009:137) argues: ‘Diasporas arise from some form of migration, but not all migration involves diasporic consciousness; all transnational communities comprise diasporas, but not all diasporas develop transnationalism’. Consequently, this study adopts a transnational conceptual framework whilst also acknowledging the ways in

which constructions of diasporic identities shape (and are shaped by) migrants' engagement in civic and political activity.

Many studies have focused on the economic aspects of transnational linkages, for example through the sending of remittances to the home country (e.g. Datta et al, 2007; Elrick, 2008; Guarnizo, 2003), but an increasing body of work has explored the political dimensions of migrants' transnational lifestyles (e.g. Baubock, 2003; Bermudez, 2010:76; Boccagni, 2011; Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003). Migrants have engaged in transnational political participation for decades through membership of community development organizations and home town associations (Guarnizo et al. 2003; Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Page, 2011). They have also been involved in various types of party politics and protest activities both locally and transnationally (Collyer, 2006; Guarnizo et al. 2003) and many retain the right to vote in home country elections (Boccagni, 2011; Collyer, 2014; Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011; Lesińska, 2014; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011; 2015).

In order to distinguish between these various types of practices, activities in which individuals engage regularly can be defined as 'core transnationalism' and more infrequent practices as 'expanded transnationalism' (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003:761). Ostergaard-Nielsen (2003:762) has also developed a typology of issues which migrants may mobilise around in transnational terms, which she assigns to four categories. Firstly, 'immigrant politics' refers to political activities which are aimed at improving the situation of migrants in the host country, such as gaining more political, social and economic rights or fighting against discrimination. This type of politics has the potential to be transnational when the home country becomes involved in the attempts of their citizens to improve their situation in the receiving country. Secondly, 'homeland politics' refers to the political activities of migrants and refugees regarding the domestic or foreign policies of their country of origin. Thirdly, 'diaspora politics' is understood as a type of homeland political practice engaged in by groups who are excluded from participation in the politics of their country of origin, or who are perhaps

members of a stateless nation. Finally, 'translocal politics' is another type of homeland politics where those living abroad are engaged in improving the situation in the local areas from which they originate (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003:763).

Migrants' continuing ties to the homeland have long been a key focus of migration studies, but more recent research has urged for greater attention to be paid to their emotional dimensions as well as their material aspects (Boccagni and Baldassar, 2015). Although emotions are an integral part of human life (and not only that those of migrants), attention should be paid to the ways in which they intertwine with particular 'migration specific-issues' (Svašek, 2010:867). As well as playing a role in migrants' decisions to leave the home country (e.g. hope, fear, guilt or excitement), emotional processes are central to the development of new relationships in the receiving society and the maintenance of ties with those 'back home' (Ho, 2008; Skirbis, 2008; Svašek, 2010). Although an emerging body of research has begun to examine the emotional dimensions of migrants' lives (Brown, 2011; Christou, 2011, Ho, 2009; Skirbis, 2008; Svašek, 2010) this area remains relatively underexplored due to the focus on political and economic analyses of migration (Boccagni and Baldassar, 2015:73).

Emotions have attracted an increasing amount of attention in geographical research, particularly in critical and feminist approaches to the discipline (e.g. Bondi et al. 2005; Koopman, 2011; Pain, 2009:2010; Pile, 2010). However, while geographers have sought to explore the emotional aspects of various geopolitical phenomena (such as Conway's (2008) research on women's marches, and Pain's (2009; 2010) work on the 'geopolitics of fear') there has been less focus on the emotional dimensions of formal politics (Schurr, 2013:115). In an attempt to address this gap, Schurr (2013) analyses the role of emotions such as 'rage' and 'fear' in electoral campaigning in Ecuador, highlighting how the candidates' 'emotional performances' shape the notion of 'the people' in ways which are differently classed, gendered and racialized. In developing the concept of 'emotional citizenship', Ho

(2009:789) urges that more attention be paid to the impact of emotions on political behaviour, explicitly focusing on the ways in which ‘emotional triggers propel or hinder political action’ (Ho, 2008:1291).

In his work on the external voting practices of Ecuadorian migrants in Italy, Boccagni (2011) highlights how voting behaviour is shaped by feelings of ‘patriotism, homesickness and the desire to reproduce their social milieu abroad’ rather than by an urge to influence politics in the homeland.

Although his work emphasises the ways in which emotions influence political engagement, my research aims to more comprehensively examine the ways in which practical and emotional considerations intertwine to shape migrants’ political behaviour in both home and host country contexts. As well as considering the impact of feelings of belonging on political participation (which will be outlined further in the section to follow) I aim to consider the broader impact of a range of emotions and how these influence participation in civic and political life.

Belonging, citizenship and their multiple dimensions

‘Belonging’ is a term which is increasingly prevalent in geographical research, but its meaning is often ‘taken for granted’ and it tends to be under-theorised (Antonisch, 2010:644; Mee and Wright, 2009:772). It is widely viewed as a ‘multi-dimensional’ concept which denotes attachments to places, groups or cultures etc. at multiple scales (Antonisch, 2010:645; Tomaney, 2015:509; Yuval-Davis, 2006:199). It is also an ‘inherently geographical concept’, as belonging is the means through which ‘matter’ (such as people, objects, practices and ideas) becomes connected to ‘place’ (Mee and Wright, 2009:772). It can be linked to citizenship (which may be understood as a formal mode of belonging) and it also has a strong affective dimension (Antonisch, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Belonging has been described as a ‘thicker’ concept than citizenship, because it goes beyond the mere fact of

group membership to also encompass the emotional aspects of attachments to people and place (Nordberg, 2006:537).

Nira Yuval-Davis (2006:197) sets out a framework for studying belonging which highlights a distinction between the concept of 'belonging' and that of 'the politics of belonging'. She argues that belonging is constructed on 'three major analytical levels': 'social locations, identifications and emotional attachments, and ethical and political values' (ibid. p. 199). Firstly, social locations refer to ascribed identities, such as membership of a particular race, class, nation, gender or age group (ibid. p. 200). These are the identities which are given to us, but not necessarily the ways in which we view ourselves. Secondly, 'identifications and emotional attachments' relate to how people identify with various ethnic, racial, national, cultural or religious groups (ibid. p. 202). While the concepts of identity and belonging are closely intertwined, identity refers more directly to the 'cognitive stories' through which people come to see themselves as part of particular groups, whereas 'constructions of belonging reflect emotional investments and desire for attachments' (ibid. p. 202).

Thirdly, Yuval-Davis (2006:203) argues that belonging is not just about 'social locations' and constructions of 'individual and collective identities and attachments' but it is also about 'the way these are valued and judged' (ibid. p. 203). This process can be directly referred to as the politics of belonging, as it concerns the ways in which the boundaries of political communities are defined and how the world becomes divided into 'us and them' (ibid. p. 204). Although this process operates at a discursive level, through the ways in which nations are constructed as 'imagined communities' (and thus distinguished from others) based on the common understanding of a shared past (Anderson, 2006), it also shapes the conduct of social relationships between individuals and groups. As Yuval-Davis (2006:204) explains:

This 'dirty business of boundary maintenance' that underlies the politics of belonging is all about potentially meeting other people and deciding whether they stand inside or outside the imaginary boundary line of the

nation and/ or other communities of belonging, whether they are 'us' or 'them'.

These interactions are also sites of power relations, as struggles take place between those who stake out a claim to belonging and those who have the power to 'grant' belonging (Antonisch, 2010:650; Yuval-Davis, 2006:204). This highlights that formal rights (for example, through citizenship) are not sufficient for belonging to be present, as it involves both a subjective sense of attachment to the community and acceptance by other members of society (Antonisch, 2010:650). Crucial to these struggles is the question of what it means to belong to a particular community and what is required in order to do so. While in some cases this may involve common descent or a common culture, in other cases it may involve an element of contribution, whether that be paying taxes, obeying the law or carrying out military service (Yuval-Davis, 2006:208).

Following Antonisch (2010), who builds on the framework developed by Yuval-Davis (2006), I also recognise the need to differentiate between 'two major analytical dimensions' of belonging. He argues for a distinction between 'belonging as a personal, intimate, feeling of being 'at home' in a place (place-belongingness)' and 'belonging as a discursive resource which constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/ exclusion (politics of belonging)' (Antonisch, 2010:645). Yuval-Davis' work has focused on the politics of belonging, but I seek to expand the idea here to include what Antonisch (2010:647) refers to as 'belonging as an emotional feeling towards place'. In doing so, I aim to more fully acknowledge how this aspect of belonging plays a role in shaping migrants' experiences and actions.

As Antonisch (2010:649) highlights, it can be difficult to separate feelings of belonging from the politics of belonging, as personal relationships to place are ultimately influenced by the nature of social relationships with people in that place. Moreover, social relations have material effects, as the physical characteristics of places are influenced by the dominant forces in the societies which shape them (Cresswell, 2008:136). As Cresswell (ibid.) notes:

Places are not just about a positive sense of attachment and rootedness but they are also bound up with power. Places are created things and tend to reflect or mediate the society that produces them.

This statement has particular relevance in the context of Northern Ireland, as migrants enter an environment where flags, murals and painted kerbstones visibly mark out places as belonging to particular groups. Although all societies exhibit their own markers of belonging, migrants to Northern Ireland face a complex array of signs and symbols which may be perceived as more or less threatening to outsiders, and which they must learn to negotiate in their everyday lives (Kempny, 2010; 2013). These visible markers of belonging are also accompanied by 'place-based norms' regarding what it is acceptable to do or say in particular places, and which shape processes of inclusion and exclusion (Cresswell, 2008:137). Nevertheless, I argue that in order to avoid 'fall[ing] into the trap of either a socially de-contextualised individualism or an all-encompassing socializ[ing] discourse' (Antonisch, 2010), it is important to take a broader perspective on belonging in order to recognise migrants' agency within this process, rather than to presuppose the ways in which they construct their relationships with place. Whilst recognising that place can be 'limiting and exclusionary' (Cresswell, 2008:136), I also aim to challenge the idea that attachments to place are necessarily exclusionary or parochial (see also Tomaney, 2013).

Focusing on the idea of political belonging, Thomas (2002:324) outlines a typology of five different types of claims which are reflected in current debates about citizenship and nationality. Firstly, she highlights that the notion of membership through biological inheritance (the 'Descent model') is present in debates over belonging but is rarely put forward as a criterion for membership by modern-day states (ibid. p. 330). Secondly, the 'Culture' model also views the nation as a 'family' but sees it mainly as a 'vehicle for socialisation' rather than for the 'biological transmission of inherited characteristics' (ibid.). The third position, referred to as the 'Belief' model, places the emphasis on identification with the founding principles of the nation. It is often stressed by American liberal thinkers who emphasise

participation in a common political culture and subscription to 'fundamental liberal political values or principles as the basis of citizenship and national identity'. In such cases, membership of the nation is based on 'principles of freedom and equality for all' rather than necessarily on a shared idea of what constitutes the good (Thomas, 2002:332).

The fourth model is referred to as the 'Contract' view of citizenship. This conceives of citizenship as a 'contract between the citizen and the state consisting of a set of duties toward the state or community, balanced by a set of rights the citizen enjoys' (p.333). Of the five models, the 'Contract' view puts the most emphasis on active participation which is conceived of as having two strands: state-centred and society-centred (p. 334). The state-centred version emphasises duties such as military service and voting, whereas the society-centred version focuses on community service through activities such as volunteering (ibid.).

Finally, the 'monetized contract' view emphasises financial contribution (such as employment, tax-paying or investment) as the means through which one claims membership in a political community. In exchange for such contributions, one can expect to enjoy benefits such as the right to welfare, housing, education and so on (ibid. p. 335.). Thomas points out that in reality, being a financial contributor is generally not an essential criterion for being granted political rights. However, by outlining this model, she aims to draw attention to the ways in which its assumptions often influence public debate, particularly in discussions about migration and who qualifies as a 'desirable' or 'undesirable' migrant. My research aims to explore how migrants may be influenced by these debates and how they play a role in their rationales for participation or non-participation in both host and home country politics.

Thomas' (2002) framework provides useful insights for analysing migrants' experiences and their understandings of membership in political communities. I aim to build on this typology by emphasising the relevance of place and scale in understanding how migrants construct belonging to

different political communities, and how this influences their civic and political activity in different places. Taking this analysis a step further, I propose the notion of a 'place-based contract' as a way of conceptualising how migrants develop relationships with place and how this shapes their political engagement. Although the possession of political rights is determined by objective criteria, such as country of birth or legal citizenship, migrants' rationales for participation in both home and host country contexts are shaped by their subjective feelings of belonging to place and their own understandings of what it means to belong to a particular political community. I argue that they view their rights and duties of participation as part of a dynamic 'place-based contract' which is situated at multiple scales, and which is continuously being shaped and renegotiated in relation to their individual circumstances, interpersonal relationships and shifts in the wider political landscape.

As well as considering citizenship as a legal status, and examining the ways in which membership of a political community can be demarcated, scholars have also analysed the processes through which citizens are actively involved in staking out citizenship claims and transforming the boundaries of citizenship. This work has highlighted that citizenship is more than just a form of legal belonging, but it is also 'a social process through which individuals and social groups engage in claiming, expanding or losing rights' (Isin, 2000:5). By conceiving of citizenship as a practice, it becomes possible to engage in it without the necessity of legal belonging. It becomes something which is 'made' by action, including the actions of those who are denied formal membership of the nation-state (Anderson, 2010:63).

Studies have used the concept of 'citizenship as practice' to analyse the political agency of migrants and to examine how they transform the circumstances in which they live (Anderson, 2010; Coll, 2011; Erel, 2009; 2011). For example, in her research with migrant women from Turkey in Britain and Germany, Erel (2009) challenges the notion of citizenship as a fixed form of legal belonging by examining the ways in which migrants act to

renegotiate its meaning. Her emphasis on recognising the women as subjects with agency is a response to the construction of female migrants as passive 'objects of knowledge' within both migration research and wider public policy debates (ibid. p. 8). She aims to further the debate by uncovering the ways in which the practices of migrant women challenge accepted notions of what it means to be a citizen (ibid. p 82). This is described as a 'transformative citizenship practice' because it challenges and successfully renegotiates 'the very substance of rights' (Erel, 2009:184, see also Staeheli et al. 2012). A similar argument is presented in a study of a domestic workers' group which successfully campaigned for a change in UK immigration law. Through the process of demanding rights, the migrants actively engaged in citizenship practices which resulted in their formal recognition (Anderson, 2010:63).

A similar focus on the transformative aspect of citizenship practices allows Isin (2009:369) to argue for a clear distinction between 'active citizenship' and 'activist citizenship'. Isin understands active citizenship as a 'repetitive practice performed by citizens' such as taxpaying, voting or enlisting whereas 'acts of citizenship' make 'a break' or 'a rupture' to change the very order of what has gone before (Andrijasevic and Anderson, 2009:364). One such example is the case of the 'Sans-papier' movement in France; a group of undocumented migrants who demanded regularisation during the 1990s (Isin, 2009:380). During demonstrations by the movement and their supporters, a defining moment came when they occupied a church in Paris and demanded the legal right to remain in the country. For Isin, this act was important because it was not framed in the language of human rights, but in the language of the 'political rights of subjects who did not possess these rights'. He stresses that the protesters did not only make the claim to stay in France, but also claimed 'the right to claim a right' (ibid.). Through assuming the subject position of rights-claiming citizens, the demonstrators engaged in an 'act of citizenship' which resulted in 'producing subjects as citizens' (Isin, 2009:371).

In contrast to Isin's description of 'activist' citizenship, 'active' citizenship has been described as 'a new mode of governmentality' which operates primarily at the local level and represents a strategy of 'governing through communities' (Cruikshank, 1999; Desforges et al., 2005:440). This incorporates practices such as 'neighbourhood watch schemes to guard against crime, community initiatives to provide or support education, social housing and welfare provision outside the state sector, and the promotion of community-led action for economic regeneration' (Desforges et al. 2005:440). Onyx et al. (2012:63) conceptualise active citizenship in a similar way, through a focus on voluntary and community work as well as engagement in political and policy-making processes. In contrast to Isin's depiction of 'activist citizenship', these types of activities are often depicted as a top-down means of controlling populations and furthering neoliberal agendas, rather than as truly transformative political practices.

I suggest here that this distinction between 'activist' and 'active' citizenship is inadequate to capture the complexity and richness of different types of political engagement. It overlooks the importance of wider engagement in 'routine' forms of politics (such as voting) or civic engagement (such as community work); containing them to the sphere of the 'non-transformative' and thus portraying them as less worthy of theoretical and empirical investigation than those forms of citizenship practices which exist 'on the margins'. There is a danger that the active/activist distinction fails to recognise the gap which often exists between having formal rights and exercising them, and how exercising the right to participate in routine political activities may be a transformative experience for those who face considerable barriers to political engagement. Individuals do not exist in a vacuum, but are engaged in a process of interaction with existing societal structures. This point may be particularly relevant in the case of migrants, as the ability of an individual to exercise rights and to participate in society depends partly on the recognition of their legitimacy as a citizen by other members of the group (Kofman, 1995:122).

Some existing literature has shed light on the complex interplay between possessing formal rights and exercising them. For example, Hopkins and Blackwood (2011:215) investigate British Muslims' accounts of how other people perceive them and how these views may be at odds with their own self-perceptions. Drawing on work by Painter and Philo (1995:115) they argue that citizenship, in an everyday sense, refers to 'the ability of individuals to occupy public spaces in a manner that does not compromise their self-identity, let alone obstruct, threaten or even harm them more materially'. They found that other peoples' tendency to focus on the religious element of their identity (at the expense of other dimensions of their professional identities or their own strong sense of themselves as 'British') made participants feel restricted in how they aired their political views or participated in political debates. Although the participants in the research were British citizens and in possession of full political rights, this did not necessarily mean that they were always able to fully exercise their rights to participate in the public sphere.

Resistance also played a role in these interactions, as participants exercised agency by challenging the ideas which people had about them (such as refusing to participate in a 'routine' passport check or a doctor 'snapping back' at a racist comment from a patient) (Hopkins and Blackwood, 2011). The role of resistance in challenging dominant conceptions of a particular group is also emphasised in Anna Secor's (2004) work on Kurdish women in Turkey. She highlights that although Kurdish migrants often hold Turkish passports (thus having formal citizenship rights) they often have problems exercising their rights due to a lack of recognition of their citizenship by the wider community (and thus may face discrimination in a wide range of ways, such as when accessing housing and employment). Parallels can be drawn with the group studied in my research, as they hold substantial formal rights but may still experience barriers to participation in economic, social and political life.

The matter of 'being' or 'not being' a member in a community is not clear-cut, and it can vary according to the emphasis placed on different social characteristics and how people are positioned within different communities or spaces (Gilmartin, 2008:183; Yuval-Davis, 2000:172). Secor (2004) demonstrates the significance of the intersectionality of identity regarding age, class, gender and ethnicity, by highlighting how different Kurdish women felt 'belonging' or being 'out of place' in different parts of the city. They also shared differing experiences regarding their participation in wider society. Some regarded areas of Istanbul as places where one could freely exchange ideas and opinions with people of various ethnicities and backgrounds, whereas others described these same areas as spaces of exclusion where they were not welcome (ibid. p. 367).

Citizenship can involve engagement in multiple public spheres, and people may 'claim membership in a range of different groups and may act politically within and through these communities' (Secor, 2004:356). This understanding of citizenship can be distinguished from citizenship in the legal sense (i.e. in terms of carrying a passport or voting), as it rather relates to 'people's sense that they are members of a specific community, and have a say in what the leaders of that community do and say' (Yuval-Davis, 2000:171). As a result, it is important to focus attention on the ways in which people come to view themselves as being part of a particular community, having a stake in that place and having the right to have a say in what happens there.

An illustrative example is that of undocumented migrants in the US who participate in the day-to-day life of their community and develop strong civic ties to it. Demonstrating such 'good conduct' can form part of the justification which underpins their application for citizenship and thus leads to the acquisition of formal citizenship rights (Sassen, 2002:282). However, in the case of those migrant or minority groups who already hold substantial citizenship rights (such as EU migrants), I posit that this process may happen in reverse. The possession of rights comes before the enactment of

citizenship practices, and the moment of 'becoming political' (Isin, 2002) (instead of staking out a claim to rights which are not yet possessed) is when they claim their entitlement to put these rights into practice.

Conceptualising citizenship at multiple scales

In his classic paper 'Citizenship and Social Class', first delivered in 1949, T. H. Marshall (2009:149) outlines citizenship as having three distinct components: civil rights; political rights and social rights. At the time of writing, the nation-state was viewed as the sole entity which could guarantee these rights and corresponding obligations (Olsen, 2008:40). Thus, in defining citizenship as 'a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community', Marshall (2009:149) referred to those who hold legal citizenship of the nation-state. However, recent scholarship has thrown this analysis into question, as the development of globalisation and international migration has altered the relationships between states and their citizens.

Soysal (1994) argues that due to developments in globalisation and the international human rights regime, citizenship ties to the nation-state have become less consequential. She posits that this signifies a shift away from citizenship as a form of national belonging towards one which is based on 'universal personhood' (Soysal, 1994:1). Due to an increasing focus on upholding human rights around the world, she argues that many of the rights which previously applied only to citizens of particular nations can now be viewed as 'personal' rights (ibid.). Using the example of guest workers in Europe after the Second World War, she highlights that despite their lack of formal citizenship status, they were able to exercise certain social, economic and political rights (ibid.). This includes access to education and welfare systems, and the ability to participate in politics, for example by joining trade unions and voting in local elections (ibid.). She posits that, 'post-national citizenship' grants the rights and duties of participation in society to

everyone, without requiring 'historical or cultural ties' to that particular community (Soysal, 1994:3).

Soysal's argument has been the target of significant criticism, as it over-exaggerates the degree to which the nation-state has lost its authority over citizenship (Collyer, 2014). For example, Kofman's (2002, cited by Collyer, 2014:58) work has shown that even within the European Union, the vast majority of non-citizens do not have rights at the same level as citizens, but that these rights can be 'conceptually located somewhere along a spectrum from full access (at one end) to the position of irregular migrants at the opposite end who are increasingly excluded from access to basic services'. Isin (2000:4) also highlights the processes of inclusion and exclusion which are inherent in granting or denying access to citizenship rights, emphasising that many rights (e.g. access to healthcare or education) have been hard-won and are not immutable. Furthermore, the rights extended to non-citizens are usually social or civil in nature, but full political rights are rarely granted to non-citizens (Collyer, 2014:58). 115 of the world's 214 countries allow non-resident citizens to vote in national elections, but very few countries permit non-citizen residents to participate in national elections (ibid. p. 62).

As a result, there is wide agreement that the nation-state still plays a crucial and primary role as the bearer of citizenship authority (e.g. Collyer, 2014; Isin, 2000; Sassen, 2002). However, it has also been acknowledged that it is necessary to reconceptualise it in ways which emphasise its multi-dimensional character (Baubock, 1994; Painter, 2002; Yuval-Davis, 2000). These approaches do not underplay the importance of the nation-state, but rather aim to highlight the 'dynamic and pliable' character of citizenship, the different scales at which it can be exercised and the 'range of other social identities' to which it may be linked (Desforges et al. 2005:441). Baubock (2010:849) offers the concept of 'citizenship constellations' in order to analyse the 'web of legal and political ties' in which citizens are implicated. He highlights that individuals are not linked to one sole political entity but

usually have relationships with several, entailing several sets of corresponding citizenship rights and duties (ibid. p. 848).

The European Union is perhaps the most notable illustration of the complex nature of citizenship in the 21st century. The Maastricht treaty, which was signed in 1992 and that entered into force in 1993, established the European Union on the basis of the previously existing European Community. The treaty forms the legal basis for EU citizenship, which includes the political rights to vote and stand for office in the local and European elections of other member states (Painter, 2002:98). EU citizens are also granted transnational rights of free movement within the union, protection of their fundamental rights wherever they reside within the union, and supranational voting rights to elect members of the European Parliament (Baubock, 2010:848).

EU citizenship is not an independent status as it first requires citizenship of an EU member state (Painter, 2002:99). Maas (2008:587) conceptualises it as a 'thin layer' which stretches over national citizenship. As EU citizenship cannot be understood using the traditional model applied to the nation-state, Painter (2002:93) highlights the salience of the concept of 'multi-level' citizenship. This involves simultaneous attachments to political communities at multiple spatial scales, encompassing the local, regional, national and European (ibid). As power has been devolved to regional assemblies in several European countries, most notably in Spain and the UK, he places particular emphasis on recognising regions 'as democratic spaces' and 'arenas for the practices of citizenship' (ibid. p. 105). My research analyses the ways in which Polish migrants construct civic identities and exercise citizenship at a range of spatial scales, including the local and the regional as well as the nation-state and supranational. This research is designed to highlight the ways in which the position of individuals within different types of 'citizenship constellations' (Baubock, 2010) involves varied and multiple forms of membership and belonging.

Thus, as well as paying attention to the new forms of citizenship authority and practices which are emerging 'above' the state, it is also important to be aware of how changes within the state are producing new forms of citizenship at the sub-national level. Sassen (2002:285) emphasises how these shifts are creating the opportunity to practise 'new forms of power and politics' and to enact new forms of local citizenship. More recent work by geographers has also sought to unpack the implications of the devolution of power within the UK and how this might help to facilitate new forms of civic participation (e.g. Wills, 2016). Although the nation-state remains the primary bearer of citizenship rights, geographers have highlighted that active citizenship is more often mobilised 'through place-based communities' (Desforges et al. 2005:440) and that people's attachments to place often have a significant influence on their civic engagement. My research explores the ways in which relationships to place and attachments to localities play significant roles in shaping migrants' political participation. In doing so, it highlights the need to 'rescale the polity' in order to pay closer attention to how migrants form attachments to place at a scale 'below' the nation-state and how that facilitates engagement in different forms of civic and political activity.

As Vertovec (2009:86) highlights, the transnational political practices of migrants disrupt the 'boundedness' of political communities as they are no longer contained within the nation-state's borders (see also Soysal, 1994). Democracy can be defined as 'a way of making collectively binding decisions, in which 'the people' (considered collectively) governs itself through the entitlement of 'the people' (considered severally) to participate as political equals in the decision-making process' (Owen, 2012:129). The increase in international migration has led to greater numbers of people living in territories where the government is not accountable to them, and greater numbers of citizens living outside the territory where they have the right to influence government decisions. Consequently, greater numbers of people live in places where they do not have full political rights. This has led to an

increased focus on how the boundaries of political community are to be defined, both in practical and normative terms (Baubock, 2003; 2008).

This 'mismatch between citizenship and the territorial scope of legitimate political authority' used to only concern political theorists; however, given the increasingly 'politicized and volatile' nature of immigration and citizenship policies, they have also become the concern of policymakers and voters (Baubock, 2008:2). Consequently, the 'democratic boundary' problem (Dahl, 1970) has shaped the contours of public debate, a recent example being the refusal to allow EU citizens who were permanently resident in the UK to vote in the referendum on the country's membership of the EU in 2016. Scholars have sought to unpack this problem in various ways; however, political theorists have shown that it cannot be resolved democratically. This is because making a democratic decision about how 'the people' should be constituted requires a 'people' to be assembled in order to engage in that act (Owen, 2012:130). Instead, political theorists have outlined a number of moral bases upon which the political community can be constituted.

A prominent argument is the 'all-affected interests' principle', which holds that democracies should include all of those affected by their laws and policies in the decision-making process (Baubock, 2008:4). As the world is increasingly interconnected, and many political issues (such as climate change or tax evasion) are global in scope, the decisions of a particular national government can have a profound impact on people living outside their territory. Although there are opportunities for these issues to be debated and discussed in international or transnational fora (for example, the UN and EU), fully upholding this principle in practice would require 'constantly modifying the composition of the legislature, depending on which citizens would be affected by a particular piece of legislation' (Baubock, 2008:5). Taking into account the different levels of affectedness of particular issues on particular groups, and giving them an input into the decision-making process accordingly, would be practically unfeasible.

As an alternative, Baubock (2008:4) proposes the 'stakeholder principle of citizenship', which holds that 'only those individuals who have a stake in the future of a politically organised society have a moral claim to be recognised as its citizens and to be represented in democratic self-government'. His definition of 'having a stake' is somewhat broad, as it includes factors such as 'having grown up in a particular society, being a long-term resident there or having close family members in another country where one does not presently reside' (ibid.). One does not have to live in a particular country or intend to live there in the future in order to meet the definition of a stakeholder, thus allowing for the possibility of emigrants' continuing engagement in homeland political life and the potential for migrants to join a new political community in the host country.

The stakeholder principle can be distinguished from the 'all-affected interests' model of political membership 'because it applies to individuals who have a permanent interest in membership and political participation rather than in particular decisions' (Baubock, 2008:5). Consequently, membership is a question of longer-term engagement with and belonging to a political community rather than concern with particular issues. Baubock argues that 'sustainable democracy requires not merely stable institutions, but also a stable core population whose members have been raised as citizens and who conceive of their future and that of their children as being linked with this particular country' (Baubock, 2008:7). Although drawing on some real-world examples, Baubock's (2008) work is largely theoretical in nature, lacking empirical consideration of the ways in which migrants justify their membership of and participation in political communities, and their motivations for political engagement. As a result, my work aims to both interrogate and develop the concept of stakeholdership by reflecting on both the practical and emotional dimensions of belonging in place, and how different dimensions of these relationships to place shape political engagement.

Conclusions

This chapter has explored the key areas of literature which provide a framework for analysing migrants' transnational political engagement. It has established that migrants' political practices are a long-established topic of inquiry; yet, there remains a need to develop our understanding of the relationships between migration, politics and place, and how migrants' attachments to place influence their political engagement in different places over time. Moreover, it has highlighted the need to view belonging as a concept with multiple dimensions, and to more fully consider how each of these aspects is implicated in relationships to place and in civic and political action.

In highlighting the importance of migrants' subjective relationships with place, I have made the case for developing the 'place-based contract' as a way of conceptualising migrants' motivations for engaging in politics and civil society in both the home and the host country. In so doing, I have drawn on debates about the political community to highlight the multi-scalar nature of the polity, stressing the need to 'rescale the polity' in order to pay closer attention to how migrants form attachments to place at a scale 'below' the nation-state and how this facilitates their civic and political engagement.

The chapter also underlined the importance of recognising how migrant agency, along with collective identities (beyond the co-ethnic or co-national), play a role in shaping migrants' civic and political engagement. I stressed the need to take a more open-ended approach to analysing migrants' identification processes, looking beyond their relationships with co-nationals/co-ethnics to consider inter-group dynamics and other identities which may be salient. I highlighted that ties to place or to a 'homeland' can be emotional as well as practical, and argued for a greater focus on how these emotional aspects can shape involvement in civic and political life in different places over time. The next chapter will set out the methodological framework for the study, before outlining the specific social, historical and political

context of Northern Ireland in more detail. This will be followed by a full discussion of the empirical findings of the research.

Chapter Three: Developing a methodological framework for the study of migration, politics and place

The broad aim of my research is to explore the civic and political participation of Polish migrants in Northern Ireland, recognising that they may be part of multiple political communities and participate in politics at multiple scales. As outlined in the previous chapter, the study draws on existing scholarship on transnationalism which views migrants as situated within 'transnational social fields'; sites in which practices, resources and ideas are exchanged through 'a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships' (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004:1009). Although not all migrants frequently engage in such practices, they always have the potential to do so due to their position within the social field (ibid. p. 1010).

Transnational approaches developed in response to criticisms of methodological nationalism, the assumption that the nation-state was the appropriate lens through which to analyse social phenomena (Çağlar, 2016:953; Martinello and Lafleur, 2008:654). These analyses encouraged an over-focus on migrants' experiences in the receiving society at the expense of studying their ties to the home country, both pre- and post-emigration (Martinello and Lafleur, 2008:654). By viewing migrants as having ties to 'only one country and one identity', studies shaped by methodological nationalism failed to recognise 'the multiple sources and dynamics of migrant agencies, sociabilities and belongings, as well as the divisions based on class, religion or politics among members of those identified as being from the 'same' group' (Çağlar, 2016:953).

Consequently, this research recognises that migrants' lives and experiences may be transnational in scope, whilst also aiming to explore the ways in which attachments to place shape their involvement in civic and political activity. Whilst focusing on Polish migrants it avoids assuming the heterogeneity of a particular co-national group, and employs a range of

research methods which will enable the diversity and complexity of migrants' practices and experiences to be explored.

This chapter sets out the methodological approach taken in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the thesis, and to answer the research questions posed. It also outlines the relevant methodological and ethical considerations which were taken into account during the different stages of research design, data collection and analysis. It begins by setting out the methodological framework and the rationale for taking a mixed methods approach. Subsequently, it provides a detailed overview of how particular methods (in-depth interviewing, a survey and ethnography) were employed. After outlining details of the sites where the research took place, it considers the issues of participant recruitment and sampling in more detail. Following this, it reflects on how the research was conducted and any ethical issues which were encountered during the process. The chapter concludes by outlining how the data was analysed and written up and also proposes a plan for dissemination of the findings.

Taking a mixed-methods approach to studying migrants' civic and political participation

Research on Polish migration to the UK has tended to be mainly qualitative in nature and it has predominantly explored migrants' experiences in particular local areas, rather than at the national scale (Burrell, 2010:303). Given this focus on migrants' experiences, methods such as in-depth interviewing (Rabikowska and Burrell, 2009; Ryan et al. 2009; White, 2011b) and ethnography (Garapich, 2007a) are often employed in order to investigate 'the meaning of central themes of the subjects' lived world' (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:29). Following wider trends within migration research (Blunt, 2007:686), more innovative methodologies have increasingly been adopted, such as discourse analysis of online discussion boards (Gałasińska and Kozłowska, 2009; Siara, 2009) photography and visual methods (Datta,

2009) and Mazierska's (2009) analysis of how Polish migration is depicted through film.

Despite the main focus on smaller-scale qualitative studies, researchers have also made use of large administrative datasets (such as Home Office Accession Monitoring Reports and the Labour Force Survey) in order to determine the characteristics of recent Polish arrivals to the UK and their position within the labour market (Burrell, 2010:297). Some of these studies have been conducted as part of a mixed-methods approach in combination with in-depth interviewing and participant observation (e.g. Drinkwater et al. 2009; Eade et al. 2007). A significant body of work has also been conducted by researchers based in Poland, who have made use of administrative data collected by the Polish government to trace migration patterns and highlight the impact of migration on the sending country (e.g. Fihel and Kaczmarczyk, 2009; Okólski and Salt, 2014).

Although useful insights can be gleaned by analysing existing quantitative data, this has its limitations. Freedom of movement, as well as patterns of temporary or circular migration, mean that EU migrants may not be included in population statistics and may be underrepresented in labour force surveys (Engbersen et al. 2013). Furthermore, the available data tends to be restricted to particular socio-demographic variables (such as gender, age, occupation and location) and thus does not help to shed light on more specific aspects of migrants' experiences. Consequently, several projects have deployed new survey research in order to focus on particular dimensions of the lives of Polish migrants and other migrant groups, such as their treatment by employers and experiences of discrimination (Anderson et al. 2006; Wills et al. 2010), their engagement with and views on trade unions (Anderson et al. 2007) and their social lives and mixing with other people outside of the workplace (Spencer et al. 2007). Although the findings cannot be generalised

to the wider population,⁶ the surveys provide a fruitful approach to conducting 'exploratory analysis' and providing an 'indication of potential patterns and relationships' beyond that which can be developed from solely carrying out a smaller number of in-depth interviews (Anderson et al. 2006:7).

Migrants' voting patterns and attitudes to political engagement can be difficult to analyse due to the lack of large-scale survey and administrative data available on the topic. The Ethnic Minority British Election Study (EMBES) complements the BES (British Election Study) by collecting a boost sample of respondents from the main British ethnic minority groups (including Black Caribbean, Black African, British Indian, British Pakistani and British Bangladeshi).⁷ It includes questions on a range of topics such as political party preference, voting behaviour and views on the main party leaders. However, EMBES focuses on established ethnic minority populations rather than new migrants, meaning that the views of other significant migrant populations, such as Latin Americans (McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011; 2015) and European Union migrants (such as Poles) are not included. It also focuses on the political participation of ethnic minorities solely in Britain, overlooking the fact that people of dual heritage or from a migratory background may have political ties to more than one polity and may engage politically in more than one jurisdiction (Collyer, 2014; Sejersen, 2008).

In recognition of this fact, research on Colombian migrants in London and Madrid has examined their voting practices and political affiliations from a transnational perspective, investigating the motivations for and the barriers

⁶ As the authors highlight, they are based on purposive rather than random samples, although they have aimed for a sample which is 'broadly representative'.

⁷ Further information about the study can be accessed at:
<https://www.sociology.ox.ac.uk/research/embes-the-ethnic-minority-british-election-study.html>

to exercising the external vote as well as their practices in the host country (McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011; 2015). Employing survey research alongside in-depth interviewing enabled the researchers to provide a comprehensive picture of transnational voting practices whilst also exploring the motivations for political engagement in more depth (McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011:1502). As a result, this research advanced knowledge on the political participation of a group which is often unrepresented in official surveys and statistics.

Although Poles are far from a hidden group (Drinkwater and Garapich, 2015:1915), data on their civic and political participation is limited, partly due to the fact that they have more commonly been viewed as economic migrants rather than political actors (Driver and Garapich, 2012a:4; see also Però, 2007a). Although they have the right to participate in the local elections of EU member states, and research has begun to highlight the various types of civic and political practices in which they engage (e.g. Driver and Garapich, 2012a; 2012b; Pietka-Nykaza et al. 2014), we still lack a comprehensive picture of their involvement in the political sphere (White, 2016:15). In Northern Ireland, little is known about the civic and political engagement of migrant groups, as large-scale migration to the region is still relatively recent and the focus on the conflict between the two 'dominant' groups has tended to overshadow migrants' needs and concerns (see Chapter 4). The Electoral Commission for Northern Ireland does not collect data on the nationalities of those who vote in local, European Parliament and NI Assembly elections, and little research has been carried out on this topic to date.

Given the lack of existing data on the topic, my research employed a mixed methods approach which examined emerging trends in migrants' political and civic engagement whilst also conducting an in-depth exploration of migrants' experiences. It attempted to overcome the limitations of different research methods by triangulation of perspectives, thus strengthening the overall findings of the research (Bryman, 2012:635). The combination of quantitative and qualitative strategies in a mixed methods approach has been

gaining popularity (Creswell, 2009:203) due to its ability to shed greater light on different aspects of a research topic (Bryman, 2012:631). This does not simply entail using these methods alongside one another, but it requires employing them in a manner where the data collected is 'mutually illuminating' (Bryman, 2012:628). For example, in-depth interviews can be used to follow up quantitative surveys in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of the relationships which have been established between different variables (Bryman, 2012:641, Creswell, 2009:16). In a similar way, the initial findings from qualitative research can be used to influence the design of survey questions to ensure that they are relevant to the group in question (Bryman, 2012:642).

In light of these considerations, my research involved the development and implementation of a short online survey which was carried out after the majority of the qualitative data had been collected through in-depth interviewing and ethnography. As a key aim of the study was to examine the ways and the extent to which Polish migrants participate in politics, including the exercise of their voting rights, the survey was helpful in generating a more extensive picture of their voting behaviour than would have been possible through the use of qualitative methods alone. The survey also allowed for some tentative conclusions to be drawn with regards to respondents' civic and political participation, which form the basis for further exploration in future research.

My survey was completed by 182 respondents. However, the findings generated from this method alone were not sufficient to meet the conceptual aims of the project: to understand how migrants construct their belonging to multiple places and political communities, and how this influences their civic and political engagement. As relationships to place and the construction of identity and belonging are highly subjective in nature, exploring these issues required the use of methods which aim to grasp the complexities of individual experience (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). As well as carrying out

in-depth interviews with 41 Polish migrants, ethnographic participant observation also formed part of the research process.

Studies have highlighted the power of ethnographic participant observation and informal ethnographic conversations to gain a deeper understanding of the lives of research participants, and to understand what people do as well as what they say (e.g. Garapich, 2007; White, 2011b). For example, Boccagni's (2011) use of participant observation (alongside a survey of Ecuadorian external voters in Italy) enabled him to grasp the ways in which the rituals of election day provided the opportunity for the re-creation of 'Ecuadorianness' overseas, a dimension which would have been difficult to capture through the survey findings alone. Moreover, an ethnographic approach usually involves engagement with a particular population over time, which is helpful when examining the dynamics of migrants' civic and political participation and how intra-group dynamics may evolve (see also Garapich, 2007b:3). As Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004:1012 - 1013) note:

A one-time snapshot misses the many ways in which migrants periodically engage with their home countries during election cycles, family or ritual events, or climatic catastrophes - their attention and energies shifting in response to a particular goal or challenge. Studying migrant practices longitudinally reveals that in moments of crisis or opportunity, even those who have never identified or participated transnationally, but who are embedded in transnational social fields, may become mobilized into action.

Addressing the research questions, aims and objectives

The methodological framework for the research was designed in order to meet its primary objectives (see Chapter 1). From these objectives, a set of more specific research questions were derived, which can be divided into three categories: Polish migrants' participation in civil society; Polish migrants' voting practices in different types of elections; and Polish migrants' support for and involvement in political parties. The research questions are

listed again below in order to demonstrate how they informed the methodological framework and the mixed methods design of the research.

1) Polish migrants' participation in civil society

- How did participants engage in civil society before arrival in Northern Ireland, and what were their experiences like?
- In what ways and to what extent do they continue to participate in Polish civil society while living in Northern Ireland?
- How do they participate in civil society in Northern Ireland (through established organisations or setting up their own organisations)?
- What are the motivations for and barriers to participation in these different types of activities (and to what extent can they be considered as 'political' in nature)?
- How is their civic participation influenced by the characteristics of particular places, and their relationships to place?

2) Polish migrants' voting practices in different types of elections

- Did participants vote in Polish elections before emigrating, and what were their reasons for doing (or not doing) so?
- Have they voted in Polish elections since moving abroad, and what are their reasons for doing (or not doing) so?
- Have they voted in elections in Northern Ireland (including local elections, Northern Ireland Assembly elections and European Parliament elections), and what are their reasons for doing (or not doing) so?
- What are their attitudes towards voting in UK Parliament elections?⁸

⁸ EU migrants cannot vote in UK Parliament elections (with the exception of those from Ireland, Cyprus and Malta). This question explored whether Polish migrants were aware of this rule, if they thought it was fair, and if it was important for them personally to gain this right to vote (i.e. through applying for British citizenship).

- How is their voting behaviour influenced by the characteristics of particular places, and their relationships to place?

3) Polish migrants' support for and involvement in political parties

- Did participants support or have membership of particular political parties whilst living in Poland, and which factors influenced their political affiliations?
- Have they continued to support or be members of particular Polish political parties since moving to Northern Ireland, and which factors have influenced this?
- If they vote in Northern Ireland, do they support particular parties and which factors influence their voting decisions?
- How do their political affiliations in Poland influence the political affiliations that they may develop in Northern Ireland?
- How are their political affiliations shaped by the characteristics of particular places, and their relationships to place?

The sections to follow will set out how the specific research methods were employed in order to address these research questions and the overarching aims and objectives of the thesis.

Carrying out the research: in-depth interviewing, ethnography and an online survey

In-depth interviewing is commonly employed in research which seeks to explore 'interpretations, experiences and spatialities of social life' (Dowling et al. 2016:680) and to gain insights into 'subjectivity, voice and lived experience' (Rapley, 2004:15). At this point, it is useful to compare two epistemological approaches to data collection and analysis, referred to as 'researcher as a miner' versus 'researcher as explorer' (Legard et al.

2003:139; see also Temple and Young, 2004:163). The former perspective views knowledge as a 'given' or 'fixed' aspect of the social world which is waiting to be discovered. Conversely, the latter perspective views knowledge as constructed through the interactions between researcher and participants, rather than as an objective 'truth' which can be grasped (ibid). In collecting and analysing the interview data, I acknowledged that explanatory accounts do not simply arise out of the data but are constructed through the process of the researcher's engagement with it (Ritchie et al. 2003:252). I thus adopted the second perspective: a social constructivist standpoint which acknowledges that meaning is being constantly renegotiated and reshaped through the process of social interaction (Bryman, 2012:33).

In-depth interviewing is often viewed as a skill rather than a method (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:19). In contrast to structured interviews where a standard procedure is rigidly followed in each case, interviewers are themselves 'research instruments' (Legard et. al. 2003:142). They require knowledge of the topic in order to ask meaningful follow-up questions and must possess sound judgement in order to spontaneously employ a wide range of questioning techniques (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:82). Consequently, qualitative interviewing is 'a craft learned by apprenticeship, hands-on experience and continual practice' rather than a process which can be carried out in an automated fashion (ibid. p. 88; see also Rapley, 2004:16).

Taking this perspective into account, there are a number of ways in which interviewers can develop and improve their technique, and which I aimed to consider whilst carrying out this research. As Legard et al. (2003:142) argue, it is vital to have an interest in and respect for the research participants and a genuine desire to understand the world from their point of view. This entails listening carefully to what the interviewee is saying, responding appropriately, demonstrating empathy in certain situations and avoiding the imposition of analytical categories on responses as soon as they are uttered (ibid. p. 144). As the aim of qualitative interviewing is to encourage participants to produce full answers and 'thick descriptions' (Rapley,

2004:15) I frequently utilised follow-up questioning techniques which aimed to generate more detailed responses, such as ‘Why do you think that?’ ‘Could you say something more about that?’ or ‘Can you give me any further examples?’ (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:135).

In addition, I also placed considerable emphasis on building rapport with participants. Upon arrival, I spent some time to speaking to the participant on a social level, understanding that they might be feeling nervous or anxious and trying to help them feel at ease (Legard et al. 2003:145). Several interviewees initially expressed concern that they would not be knowledgeable enough about the topic to give me the ‘right’ answers. In this case, it was helpful to emphasise that they were no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers and that I was interested in hearing their honest opinions and points of view (ibid. p. 157).

My research involved carrying out 39 semi-structured interviews with 41 Polish migrants in total⁹. As the focus was specifically on civic and political participation, a semi-structured approach was judged as more appropriate than unstructured or biographical interviewing techniques. This provided enough flexibility to probe participants’ answers and explore newly emerging themes whilst maintaining an element of structure and remaining within the field of interest (Legard et al. 2003:141). It also ensured that the time required for the interviews was not an unreasonable burden on the participants. Prior to the interviews I prepared an interview schedule (see Appendix C) which acted as a memory aid and ensured that the key questions were addressed (Arthur and Nazroo, 2003:115).

⁹ As will be outlined further in Chapter 4, I also planned to interview representatives of political parties in Northern Ireland in order to ask them about their position on immigration and minority ethnic and migrant integration, as well as any actions which they were taking to reach out to minority ethnic communities and encourage more diverse representation within their parties. However, only one party (the Green Party NI) responded to my request for an interview. Due to the lack of response, I substituted this element of the research with an analysis of political party manifestos in Chapter 4.

As some aspects of the topic could be considered to be quite sensitive (such as political party preferences) and the focus was on understanding individuals' experiences rather than observing group dynamics, interviews were judged to be a more suitable method than focus groups (Gill et al. 2008). However, in two cases, participants were interviewed as a pair (of close friends in the first instance and sisters in the second). This was partly due to the need to fit in with participants' (often very busy) schedules and to hold interviews at the times and in the places which suited them. However, particularly in the second case, the presence of a familiar face provided reassurance for an interviewee who was initially rather nervous about sharing her experiences, but who grew in confidence as the interview progressed. In these two cases, the presence of another person enabled the participants to test ideas out on one another and this introduced a lively dynamic to the interaction.

Prior to commencing the research, I received ethical approval from the Queen Mary Research Ethics Committee (see later sections of this chapter for more details on ethical considerations). Each interview began with a briefing where I outlined the purpose of the research, asked for the participant's consent to record the interview, reviewed the information on the consent form and asked the participant to sign it (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:128). In line with standard ethical guidelines it was made clear that participants could terminate the interview at any time, that their participation was entirely voluntary and that their contribution would remain anonymous (Silverman, 2006:323). At this point, participants were given the opportunity to raise any further questions about the research and they were informed that they could contact me with any questions that may arise following the interview.

Interviews were carried out in either English or Polish, depending on participants' preferences and levels of language proficiency. Participant information and consent forms were also available in both languages (see Appendices A and B). The topic guide was formulated in English, translated

into Polish (by myself) and checked and amended by a qualified translator and Polish native speaker. It was then piloted with several Polish native speakers and the questions were modified accordingly in order to ensure clarity of meaning and expression. As I lived in Poland for approximately two years prior to commencing this research, I carried out some of the interviews in Polish without the use of an interpreter.¹⁰ However, I was conscious of my position as a non-native speaker and was careful to ask participants to speak more slowly or repeat if I was not sure I had understood what they had said.

Overall, 14 interviews were carried out in Polish and the remaining 25 in English. However, in most interviews there was some use of both languages. In some cases, the occasional use of English could be interpreted as a 'political statement' or as a way of showing me, an Irish/British researcher, that they could speak English. For example, one Polish-speaking participant switched into English when he was discussing his process of adjustment to life in Northern Ireland and his belief that migrants should make the effort to learn the local language. In some cases, conducting interviews in Polish would have seemed odd as the participant spoke better English than I spoke Polish. However, some of these participants occasionally found it difficult to translate idiomatic expressions from Polish and thus to express themselves as precisely as they wanted to. In these situations, I encouraged them to speak in Polish and we were usually able to clarify and agree on the meaning between us.

¹⁰ After finishing my undergraduate studies I worked in Poland as an ESOL teacher for nearly 2 years. I was also an Erasmus student at the University of Warsaw for a semester during my undergraduate degree. In addition, prior to starting the fieldwork for this research, I completed a 3 week intensive language course (at B2/C1 level) at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. At the end of the course I passed a spoken and written exam at B2 level.¹⁰ According to the European Common Framework for Languages, this level indicates that the student 'can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible and 'can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining [their] views'. The full framework is available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/9_languages_common_european_framework_of_reference_en.pdf

Even when interviewers display understanding, are empathetic and are skilled at building rapport, there will always be an unbalanced power relation between the two parties involved (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:33). The interviewer is the one who initiates the situation, defines the topic, asks the questions, steers the direction of the discussion and decides when to end the interview (ibid.). In addition, during the process of analysis, the researcher has 'the monopoly of interpretation' over what has been said (ibid.). In an attempt to redress this balance, I aimed to offer interviewees an element of control over the interview process, beginning with inviting them to choose the location for the interview as well as the time. The ability to choose the language of participation and to express themselves in their native language also played a role in overcoming some of the power imbalances (as well as possible confusion and miscommunication) which may result when participants are interviewed in their second language by an English native speaker (see Temple and Young, 2004:164). Interviews ended with a debriefing which involved asking the participants if they had anything left to say, allowing them to have the last word and thus exercise a greater degree of control over the interview process (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009:129). In order to give participants further input into the process, I returned the transcript to them after the interview and offered them the opportunity to make further comments and clarify points if they wished. Only one participant made very minor amendments to the transcript.

Although I aimed to ensure that locations for interviews were appropriate (in terms of being quiet and private enough to be able to talk at length) I was flexible on this point given that the majority of the participants had both work and family commitments. Consequently, interviews took place in a variety of locations, including workplaces, coffee shops and participants' homes. In most cases they lasted between 1 and 2 hours, with a few lasting more than 2 hours. In some cases, I was invited to stay afterwards for tea or dinner as participants were often interested in discussing my experiences of living in Poland. After each interview, I set aside time to reflect on what was discussed and note down some of the key points, including anything which

was particularly surprising or unexpected. This assisted with the preliminary stages of analysing the transcripts (Bryman, 2012:147).

The data collected through the in-depth interviews was complemented by ethnography, an approach often employed in studies which recognise the importance of subjectivity and engagement (Tedlock, 2008:152). The ethnographer's aim is 'to understand parts of the world as they are experienced and understood in the everyday lives of the people who actually 'live them out' (Cook & Crang, 2007:1). This entails involving oneself in the 'day-to-day activities' of the people in question, beginning without any fixed assumptions about what will be discovered (May, 2001:148). It involves the observation of what people do as well as what they say, which can serve as a means of triangulation for data collected using other research methods (ibid. p. 153). Like the knowledge which is constructed through the interview encounter, ethnographic data is not waiting to be 'plucked' from the field but is produced through the researcher's involvement in social interaction (Megoran, 2006:626). In order to keep a careful record of observations and reflections, I took detailed fieldnotes after each encounter and kept a research diary throughout the process.

This stage of the research mainly took place between September 2014 and May 2015, while I was in the field carrying out interviews, but I kept in touch with some of those I met and attended relevant events during visits to Northern Ireland after this period. The initial fieldwork period involved familiarisation with the group and the social environment. Over time, I aimed to move towards a deeper understanding of why people behave as they do and the meanings which they ascribe to their behaviour and that of others (May, 2001:160). This came about through informal conversations and interactions, as well as attending relevant events (Collie et al. 2009:142). I mainly attended events which were open to the general public and generally advertised through social media, such as an Open Day at a Polish Saturday School and events organised as part of Polish Cultural Week. I also took part in celebrations that are of historical importance in the Polish calendar, such

as Constitution Day and Independence Day. Along with some of my participants, I attended several Polish masses on both regular occasions and at times of religious importance (such as Easter). In the run-up to the 2015 Polish Presidential elections I was also present at an event in Belfast where one of the candidates promoted his manifesto. Furthermore, I carried out ethnographic participant observation at a polling station in Belfast during the first round of voting.

In some of the cases above, the events were conducted bilingually in order to make them accessible to the wider community rather than just those who spoke Polish. However, speaking Polish was a clear asset in many of these situations (for example, the meeting with the Presidential candidate was conducted only in Polish). Deepening my knowledge of Polish language, culture, history and politics also helped me to develop a 'sensitivity to context' which enhanced the quality of my interactions, observations and subsequent analysis (Yardley, 2000:220). In addition to these public events, I got to know people who invited me to various social occasions such as dinners and parties at their homes. I was also invited to observe lessons at a Polish Saturday School during a normal working day and speak to the teachers there. This provided the opportunity to collect additional data which complemented that which I could access through other research methods. In line with ethical considerations, I made sure that the people I spoke to at these events were made fully aware of my role as a researcher. Although the time and resource limitations of the research confined the main stage of the fieldwork to nine months, engaging with some participants over time, and keeping in touch after the main fieldwork period had finished, provided useful insights into how migrants' political engagement might ebb and flow rather than remain constant. This will be further explored during the discussion of the research findings in later chapters of the thesis.

Following the completion of the interviews and the majority of the ethnographic participant observation at relevant events, I conducted the online survey (Appendix D) which attracted 182 respondents. It consisted of

40 questions and was designed to take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The majority of the questions were closed (requiring yes/no answers or selecting a pre-coded option) but it also included a few open questions, such as asking participants to state the issues that they thought it was most important for the government in Northern Ireland to address. The questions were designed to help establish wider patterns of voting behaviour and support for particular political parties, but they were also used to explore issues which had been raised in the initial stage of the qualitative research (such as participants' reasons for not voting in Northern Ireland elections). Initial analysis of the qualitative material offered helpful insights which shaped the design of the survey and helped to ensure that the questions and pre-coded responses would be relevant to the respondents completing it (Parfitt, 2005:87).

The survey was formulated in English with some of the original questions modelled on those posed by McIlwaine and Bermudez (2011; 2015) in their survey of Colombians' transnational voting practices. I then translated the survey into Polish and it was subsequently checked and amended by a qualified translator and Polish native speaker. Following this, it went through several rounds of changes in response to piloting with Polish native speakers¹¹ in order to ensure clarity of expression. Throughout this process, it was important to bear in mind the need to keep it fairly short and concise in order to maximise the response rate without unduly compromising the quality of the data collected (Parfitt, 2005:87).

The survey was administered using the Bristol Online Survey tool (BOS) which is designed for use in academic and public sector research. BOS has advantages over other online survey programmes (such as Survey Monkey or

¹¹ I asked several Polish speaking friends to take the survey and offer comments on its clarity and possible interpretations of the questions. During an 8 week stay in 2015 at the Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw, Dr Magdalena Lesińska (who is an expert on the political engagement of the Polish diaspora and a Polish native speaker) also provided very helpful comments on a draft of the survey. However, full responsibility for the design of the survey lies with me.

Smart Survey) because of the professional style of its layout and its association with university research. This makes it more likely to stand out to potential participants, who may encounter requests to complete online surveys (e.g. for market research purposes) on a regular basis. It is also easy for both researchers and participants to use. In addition, the number of questions in a survey is not limited which allows greater flexibility in survey design. After I had piloted the paper version of the survey with Polish native speakers, I also asked several Polish speakers to pilot the online version of the survey when it had been inputted to BOS. I then made any necessary changes to the online version before opening the survey up to a wider pool of respondents.

Participant recruitment and sampling

Much of the research on migration to Northern Ireland has been focused on Belfast, the capital city (e.g. Bell, 2012; Geoghegan, 2009; Jarman and Byrne, 2007; Kempny, 2010; 2013). However, in line with wider patterns of Polish migration to the UK, A8 migrants have settled in rural areas as well as in urban centres, attracted by employment opportunities and what is sometimes viewed as a better quality of life (McAreavey, 2012:489). A8 migrants are spread across NI but the largest numbers are concentrated in Belfast and in the predominantly rural areas of Dungannon, Craigavon, and Newry (Russell, 2012:14), which is related to labour demand in agriculture and food processing. Although the largest numbers of migrants are based in these locations, other areas of Northern Ireland have also undergone significant population change over the past decade. Consequently, as well as carrying out research in Belfast, the decision was taken to also recruit participants in other parts of Northern Ireland where there are substantial Polish populations.

Prior to commencing the fieldwork, I aimed to establish connections with relevant organisations working with Polish migrants which might be able

help to recruit participants for the research. I already had some knowledge of the various migrant support organisations operating in Northern Ireland due to prior involvement in this field as a volunteer¹². In April 2014, I met a board member of a Polish organisation in order to discuss the research and potential cooperation. She was initially keen to engage with the research but by the time I was ready to commence the fieldwork (in September 2014) she was no longer on the board of the organisation. Although she forwarded my email to other relevant people, it was several months before I made contact with someone who would be able to assist with the research¹³. In the meantime, I had to find other ways of recruiting participants. Consequently, I focused on building relationships with a range of key stakeholders in areas where there were substantial Polish populations.

As well as analysing the ways in which Polish migrants participate in politics and civil society and their motivations for doing so, I aimed to explore the experiences of migrants who were not politically engaged and to understand some of the barriers to civic and political engagement. Consequently, I recruited participants using a ‘purposive’ strategy which involves selecting them based on their potential to generate data linked to the research aims and questions (Berg, 2007:51). I aimed to achieve a sample which was balanced between those who were engaged in civic and political activity and those who were not, in order to avoid ‘sampling on the dependent variable’ and focusing only on those migrants who were politically active (Guarnizo, 2003:1213; Portes, 2003:876).

¹² From October 2012 – June 2013 I was a part-time intern with the Northern Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) while completing a Master’s degree. NICEM were an umbrella organisation which carried out research, campaigns and advocacy on behalf of their members (ethnic minority community organisations). I worked within their policy, campaigns and communications team which provided opportunities to become more familiar with the policy context and to make initial contacts in this field.

¹³ The rapid turnover of those involved in relevant organisations was a recurrent challenge encountered while carrying out the research. The issue was exacerbated due to the fact that I was mainly focused on organisations which were run by volunteers and had few or no paid staff.

Previous research on migration to Northern Ireland has considered the role of the voluntary sector and local community organisations in supporting new migrants (e.g. McAreavey, 2012). This work involved interviewing key staff in relevant organisations. However, due to increasing scholarly interest in migration to the region, as well as a number of other ongoing Masters and PhD projects which I became aware of in the early stages of my fieldwork, I was concerned about contributing to ‘research fatigue’ by making requests for interviews to the same key informants (see Clark, 2008). Furthermore, I was interested in exploring Polish migrants’ experiences of participation in and their motivations for setting up Polish community organisations, which has received much less attention than the role of the established voluntary and community sector in supporting migrants and ethnic minorities. I had also benefited from a number of informal conversations with people in key organisations prior to commencing the fieldwork, such as the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP) and the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM). Therefore, I did not feel it was necessary to approach these people again for formal interviews.

My interview sample can be broken down into a typology comprising three broad groups:

1. **Very actively involved in either civic or political life** (or in both). For example, have established or run an organisation for Polish migrants or have been active in a political party (i.e. holding a position of responsibility or standing for election) - 13 participants.
2. **Moderately involved in civic and political life** (or in both). For example, have been involved in community organisations/Polish organisations on a voluntary basis and/or regularly follow politics and vote in one or both contexts – 14 participants.
3. **Not very involved in civic and political life**. For example, follow politics only occasionally in one or both contexts and little or no

experience of voting. Not involved in civil society, voluntary organisations or political parties – 14 participants.

Efforts were also made to recruit participants of different age groups and educational and professional backgrounds, as well as a balance of male and female participants (see the following section for more details). With the aim of achieving this, I began the process from multiple starting points. I was previously aware of a number of interviewees included in the first group due to my previous voluntary work and involvement in the area. If their email addresses were publically available then I contacted them directly to ask them to participate in the research. However, I recruited the majority of participants in both the first and second group by attending various events and either talking to them directly or being given their contact details by someone I had met. As a result, snowballing (Sturgis, 2008:180) formed a key part of the recruitment process. However, I was careful not to over-rely on this as I aimed to recruit a diverse range of participants and thus tried to avoid interviewing more than a few people from each starting point (Bloch, 2004:177).

The recruitment of the third group required a slightly different approach, as they were not involved with organisations and thus were less likely to attend community events. I was initially unsure of how to go about the recruitment process, as I did not think that people who were not interested in politics were likely to respond to a leaflet asking them to participate in a research project on civic and political participation. However, the recruitment of these participants evolved more by chance and good luck than by design. Upon arrival in Belfast to commence my fieldwork, I placed an advert on gumtree (an online notice board) for a Polish language exchange partner to practise my Polish in return for helping them with English (free of charge). Although my Polish was already fairly adequate I was keen to keep practicing and build my confidence for carrying out the interviews and ethnographic element of the study. Within a day or two I had received around 10 replies and unfortunately (due to time constraints) could only arrange initial meetings

with the first two who replied to the advert, Grzegorz, a 41 year old man working as a mechanic and Alina, a 22 year old woman who had recently arrived in Belfast and was working in the factory of a bakery (employed through an agency). Fortunately, I developed good relationships with both of them and they were of significant help in assisting me to recruit participants that it would otherwise have been quite difficult to reach.

In Alina's case, she was living with her fiancé, his sister and her fiancé in a shared house in Belfast. Another sister and brother (with their respective partners and children) lived nearby. As we became friends and met weekly to help each other with our respective languages, I spent time at their house and got to know the family and the people who visited. They were generally rather puzzled about why I was doing research about Poles and politics, and were not initially interested in participating in the research (which I accepted). However, after some time Alina's fiancé's two sisters became more curious about the research and asked if they could participate in an interview. In Grzegorz's case, he asked all of his friends if they would be interested in talking to me and a few of them consented to have their contact details passed on. Other participants came via contacts in Belfast who were not Polish but worked with Polish people or had Polish friends. I also met a few participants at meet-up groups which were not specifically for Polish migrants but for anyone who was new to the city or wanted to meet new people.

Although I went to considerable effort to attend different events and get to know new people, it should be acknowledged that many of the contacts I made happened by chance (see also Rapley, 2004:17). In one such case, I struck up a conversation with a woman in the café of a cinema while waiting to watch a Polish film. She turned out to be a local politician who provided an email introduction to an influential participant in the first group. Another participant was a waitress in a local café where I often met a Polish friend for coffee. She overheard us chatting in Polish and offered to participate in my research after several conversations about my time in Poland and how I had

learnt the language. I met another participant (from the first group) at the event where a Polish presidential candidate came to canvass prior to the elections in 2015. I took notes in order to remember the key points from the candidate's speech (which was in Polish), and he could see over my shoulder that I was writing in English. After assuming I was a journalist and quizzing me about what I was doing, he offered to participate in my research and tell me about some of the initiatives that he was involved in organising.

The majority of the interviews were carried out between September 2014 and May 2015, with a few remaining interviews carried out in September 2015. The initial findings from the interviews were used to inform the design of the online survey, which was launched in early January 2016 and open for responses until the end of April 2016. The online survey was targeted at participants who had been in Northern Ireland for at least a year and were over 18 at the time of completion (in order to ensure that they had both the right and the opportunity to vote in elections). I distributed the link to those who had participated in the interviews and also asked them to distribute it to their contacts via email. Furthermore, I posted the link to the survey on various social media pages where Polish migrants would be likely to view it (such as the Facebook page 'Poles in Northern Ireland' which has over 4000 members). Although the initial response to the survey was encouraging (receiving more than 70 responses on the first day) the pace of completion slowed thereafter. I continued to post regular reminders to the relevant social media pages over the course of the four months that the survey was active and I also sent some follow-up emails to my contacts. However, I limited the frequency of these reminders so as not to exploit the goodwill of those who had been helping me to distribute the survey link and allowing me to use the pages of their online communities to promote my research.

As the possibilities for online research have expanded, a growing literature has assessed the pros and cons of using this medium for data collection (Fricker, 2008; Hewson et al. 2003; Vehovar and Lozar Manfreda, 2008). Online research offers considerable advantages in terms of time and cost,

which were extremely helpful to me as a lone researcher on a limited budget. It also allowed me to reach respondents who were based across Northern Ireland, which would have otherwise been difficult with the time and resources I had at my disposal. Another key reason for choosing this medium of distribution was that the alternative (surveying people face-to-face at various community events) would have introduced a sampling bias in that I would only have collected data from those who attend community events in the first place. I was also advised by my interview participants that an online survey could yield a better response rate as busy people would have the opportunity to complete it at home and in their own time.

On the other hand, online survey research has some limitations which must be acknowledged. Firstly, the way in which respondents were recruited produces a convenience sample, meaning that the results cannot be generalised to the wider population. Although this is a common problem in survey research with migrants, due to the lack of an available sampling frame, further bias may be introduced through online research due to the fact that only those who have an internet connection and know how to use a computer are able to participate. Although the majority of Polish migrants in Northern Ireland are fairly young (leading to the assumption that they are more likely to be IT literate) and research highlights migrants' frequent use of communication technologies in order to keep in touch with friends and family back home (e.g. Metykova, 2010) there is no doubt that some of the target population will be automatically excluded from participation.

Despite the limitations of this method of data collection in the project in question, methodological decisions will always involve trade-offs between data quality and the practical constraints of carrying out research, such as cost, time, resources and ease of access to participants (Fricker, 2008:197). A number of other options were considered in order to yield a more representative sample, such as Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) (Heckathorn, 1997). However, initial investigation found that this was also likely to be too costly and resource-intensive to be viable for a PhD project,

and doubts have also been cast on the suitability of this method for research on Polish migrants (given that it is primarily intended for use with 'hidden' populations) (Drinkwater and Garapich, 2015). As a result, the approach detailed above was taken as it offers insights into the broader picture of migrants' participation than can be obtained through the use of qualitative methods alone, and it also allows for the generation of some tentative hypotheses which can be tested in future work.

Examining the profile of the research sample

When discussing the demographic profile of the sample it is helpful to consider existing data on the composition of the Polish population in Northern Ireland. As mentioned previously, it is difficult to obtain accurate statistics on the size and characteristics of this population at any one point in time, as freedom of movement within the European Union allows for the fluid crossing of borders without entry and exit data being formally recorded. Although the 2011 census is now somewhat outdated, it remains the best source of available information on the demographic make-up of the Polish population in Northern Ireland.

Data from this census indicates that there are currently approximately 19,700 Polish-born residents in NI. There are slightly more males (52%) than females (48%). Regarding their age profile, nearly a fifth are aged 0 – 15 (18%), the majority (57%) are aged 16 to 34, a quarter are aged 35 – 64, and less than 1% are aged 65 or over (NISRA, 2011a). Although the NI census does not provide specific breakdowns of the qualification levels and occupational categories of Polish-born residents, this information was obtained on request from NISRA (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency) and is displayed in Tables 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 3.1: Polish-born residents in Northern Ireland by qualification level and sex

Level of Qualifications	All usual residents aged over 16 & born in Poland	Male	Female	% of total
No qualifications	2533	1302	1231	15.7%
Level 1 qualifications	1082	580	502	6.7%
Level 2 qualifications	1215	578	637	7.5%
Apprenticeship	241	193	48	1.5%
Level 3 qualifications	1056	575	481	6.5%
Level 4 qualifications and above	3197	1441	1756	19.8%
Other qualifications	6845	3846	2999	42.3%
Total	16169	8515	7654	100%

Source: NISRA, 2011b¹⁴

As shown in the table above, the majority of Polish-born residents (more than 40%) have qualifications in the 'Other' category. This category includes vocational or work-related qualifications and qualifications gained outside the UK which cannot be easily mapped to the UK framework. The second largest group (nearly 20%) has Level 4 qualifications and above (a university degree or higher academic qualification). Nearly 16% have no qualifications, followed by 7.5% with Level 2 qualifications (5+ GCSEs or equivalent) and approximately 7% with Level 1 qualifications (1 – 4 GCSEs or equivalent). 6.5% have Level 3 qualifications (A levels or equivalent) and the smallest

¹⁴ Data not publically available in this format but obtained from NISRA on request.

group have apprenticeships (1.5%). It is likely that many of those in the first group (the 'Other' category) have skills which would be gained through apprenticeships in the UK but are often obtained at technical high schools in Poland (and thus not directly comparable to the UK qualifications framework). This could explain why 18% of Polish-born residents are employed in skilled trades (see Table 3.2.) but only a very small number have completed apprenticeships.

Table 3.2 shows that although 20% of Polish residents have a level 4 qualification or above, less than 3% work in senior and managerial positions and just over 6% work in professional occupations. The largest proportion (28%) is concentrated in elementary occupations and 22% are process, plant and machine operatives. Previous research on migration to Northern Ireland has demonstrated that many migrants work below their level of qualifications and have difficulty gaining recognition for qualifications and experience gained abroad (Irwin et al. 2014:3; McAreavey, 2012:497; Wallace et al. 2013:3). This corresponds with research evidence from other parts of the UK (Anderson et al, 2007:9; Heyes, 2009:182; May et al. 2007).

Table 3.2: Polish-born residents in Northern Ireland: all employees by occupational category and sex

Occupation	All usual residents aged 16 to 74 in employment and born in Poland	Male	Female	% of all employees
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	335	205	130	2.6
2. Professional occupations	811	406	405	6.4
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	571	284	287	4.5
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	590	209	381	4.6
5. Skilled trades occupations	2,290	2,019	271	18.0
6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations	969	219	750	7.6
7. Sales and customer service occupations	792	254	538	6.2
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	2,788	2,013	775	21.9
9. Elementary occupations	3,583	1,692	1,891	28.1
Total	12,729	7,301	5,428	100

Source: NISRA, 2011c¹⁵

¹⁵ Data not publically available in this format but obtained from NISRA on request.

As mentioned previously, Polish migrants are fairly widely dispersed across Northern Ireland, although the largest numbers are concentrated in and around Belfast. The census does not provide data on the locations of foreign-born nationals broken down by specific nationality, but it does provide information on the numbers of A8 migrants living in each district (see Table 3.3.). As the majority of A8 migrants to Northern Ireland are Polish, this data gives a strong indication of where the largest numbers of Polish migrants are located. The 10 locations with the largest numbers of A8 migrants are listed in the table below.

Table 3.3: 10 locations in Northern Ireland with the largest numbers of A8 migrants

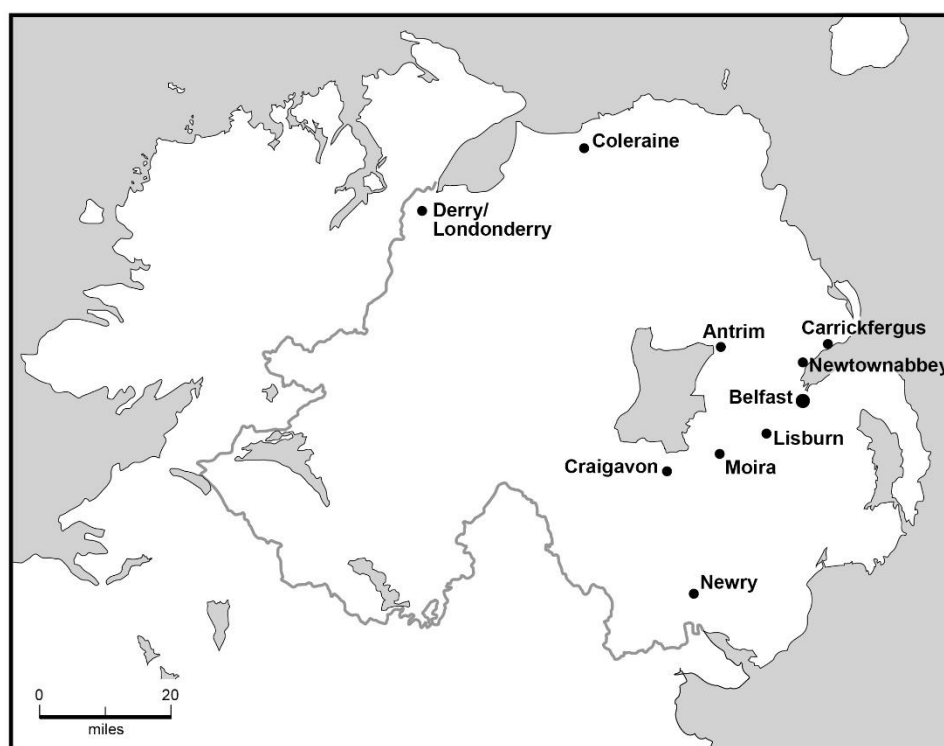
Location	Number
1. Belfast	6600
2. Dungannon	4400
3. Craigavon	4000
4. Newry and Mourne	4000
5. Ballymena	2200
6. Armagh	1900
7. Antrim	1700
8. Omagh	1600
9. Coleraine	1400
10. Fermanagh	1300

Source: NISRA, 2011d

The majority of the 39 interviews for my research were carried out in Belfast (21 interviews) or in the surrounding areas of Newtownabbey (3) and Carrickfergus (1). I also interviewed participants from Craigavon (4), Newry (3), Coleraine (2), Lisburn (2), Antrim (1), Derry/Londonderry (1) and Moira (1) (see Figure 3.1 for details of these locations). In addition, I was invited to

visit a Polish Saturday School in Ballymena where I had informal conversations with the head teacher, staff and a local Polish priest (although I did not have the opportunity to conduct any formal interviews there). However, the sample did not include any interviewees from Dungannon (the location with the second largest number of A8 migrants after Belfast). I attempted to make contact with several organisations in Dungannon but I did not receive a response. I suspected that this might have been related to increasing research interest in the area (due to rapid population change since EU enlargement) and several other research projects which had recently been carried out or were ongoing at the time.

Figure 3.1: Map of Northern Ireland showing locations of interview participants



Source: Queen Mary School of Geography Cartographer and author's interview data

All of the interviewees were Polish citizens who had been born in Poland. Regarding the demographic profile of the sample, I interviewed 16 men and 25 women. This was an over-representation of women in comparison to the 2011 census data, which shows a 48/52 female/male split. The majority of Polish diaspora organisations (such as Polish Saturday Schools and other community groups) appeared to be run by women and the majority of the teachers at the Polish Saturday Schools were also women. I also interviewed three candidates who stood in local elections in Northern Ireland, all of whom were women. This partly explains the over-representation of women in the sample, but I also encountered some reluctance from men with regards to participating in an interview. Although I had many informal ethnographic conversations with men about the topic of the research, some appeared less comfortable about the idea of a more 'formal' interview setting. In several cases this was because they felt that they had little to say on the topic. As one man commented, 'Poles came here for work and not for politics'.

For example, during a barbecue at Alina's house, her fiancé's sisters (who I had interviewed a few weeks previously) tried to encourage some of the men present to volunteer for an interview. The two women had found it to be a positive experience and had talked to me for more than 2 hours. However, the men at the table were not enthusiastic about the prospect, saying that 'they could chat with me over some vodka' but they didn't like the idea of sitting down with a tape recorder. Their long working hours are also likely to have played some part in this. Although Polish migrants of both genders have high levels of economic activity, women appeared more likely to work part-time once children were born and therefore it was generally easier to arrange a suitable time to meet them to talk at length. As a female researcher, it is also likely that they felt more comfortable talking to me than the men did and I had the advantage of fitting easily into situations where other women and children were present.

The interviewees ranged in age from 18 to 56, although the majority were in their mid -20s to mid-40s (see Appendix E for more details). This is broadly

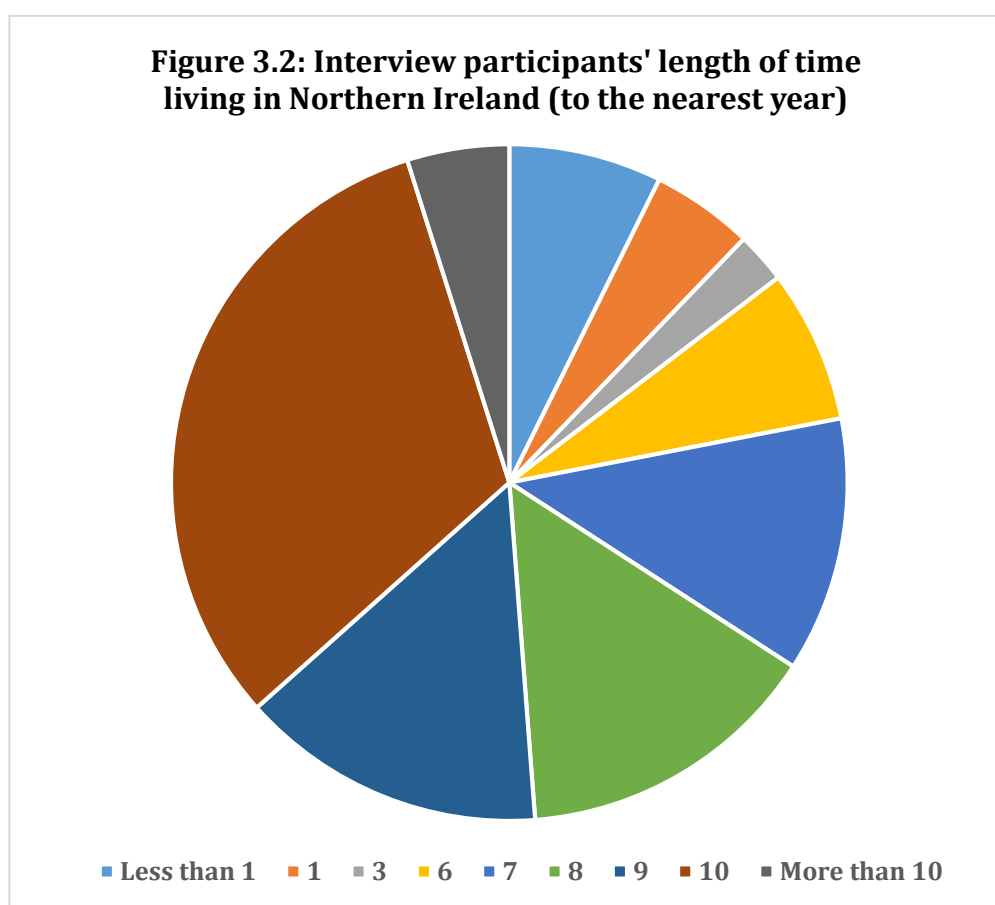
in line with the wider demographic profile of Polish migrants in Northern Ireland, the majority of whom were aged between 16 and 34 at the time of the last census (NISRA, 2011a). More than a third of interviewees had children, all of whom were living with them in Northern Ireland. All interviewees had migrated to Northern Ireland as adults, with the exception of Ela who had arrived with her family when she was 8 years old and had lived in Northern Ireland for 10 years. She contacted me through the social networking platform Twitter offering to participate in the research¹⁶. Although I thought that her experiences were likely to be fairly different to those of the migrants who had arrived as adults, I decided that it would be helpful to hear her experiences of growing up in Northern Ireland and that this would add an additional dimension to the research.

In terms of education, the majority of participants (27) were highly educated with at least a Bachelor's degree. Of the remaining participants, 9 had completed the equivalent of A levels (Polish 'Matura' exam) and 4 had completed some form of secondary level technical education (see Appendix E for more details). Ela, who had migrated to Northern Ireland as a child, had recently embarked on a Bachelor's degree in London. In terms of their employment status, the majority of participants had jobs in line with their qualifications or their previous occupations back home, although many had worked in low-skilled jobs on arrival (or pursued further study in Northern Ireland) before making this transition. However, some participants had found it difficult to have their qualifications recognised in Northern Ireland, such as several women who had trained as teachers in Poland.

I attempted to incorporate the views of migrants who had been living in Northern Ireland for varying periods of time, in order to understand how length of residence may have an impact on their motivations for civic and political engagement. Participants' length of time living in Northern Ireland

¹⁶ Although I did not actively use Twitter to recruit participants, I mention my research interests and have a link to my QMUL staff page on my Twitter profile.

is displayed in Figure 3.2. This demonstrates that half of the interview participants had lived in Northern Ireland for 9 years or more. None of the interviewees were engaged in patterns of circular or seasonal migration although a significant number had initially come to Northern Ireland with the intention of staying only for a short period. This is line with the findings of existing research, which highlights the challenges of researching migration intentions as these tend to change over time (Drinkwater and Garapich, 2015).



Source: Author's interview data

Following EU enlargement, researchers were keen to herald the beginning of a 'new migration system in Europe' (Favell, 2008:701), clearly distinguishing intra-EU migration from previous models of guest-worker and postcolonial migration. They posited that temporary and circular forms of migration were much more common among EU citizens, facilitating multiple stays

interspersed with periods back home and ‘commuter migration’ (Morokvasic, 2004, cited by Ryan and Sales, 2013:93). The temporary and circular patterns of migration enabled by freedom of movement were characterised by their ‘openness’ and ‘fluidity’, presenting a challenge to the traditional idea of migration as a linear, long-term movement from one place to another (Castles, 2010:1566). However, subsequent work has highlighted that these patterns may not be as common as first thought, and that many Poles are ‘here to stay’ (Erdal and Lewicki, 2016; White, 2016).

Although it is difficult to say how many migrants plan to stay permanently, it should be acknowledged that these ‘fluid’ or ‘temporary’ migrants may be more difficult to capture in research samples. For example, Alina’s fiancé’s brother was engaged in a circular pattern of migration and he frequently returned to Poland where his wife and baby daughter still lived. Although I met him several times and he was willing to participate in an interview, it proved impossible to schedule this due to his long working hours as a chef and frequent returns to Poland for several weeks or months at a time. In his case, his lifestyle made it difficult to engage in politics in either polity, as his main focus was on providing for his family. However, he is not necessarily representative of all migrants in his situation, and further research is required to examine the experiences of this group in greater depth.

Regarding the demographic profile of the 182 respondents to the survey, 75% were female. During the process of collecting responses I recognised this gender imbalance and attempted to recruit more men to complete the survey, which was unfortunately unsuccessful. The majority of participants (109) were aged 30 – 39, with 30 participants aged 20 – 29, 26 participants aged 40 – 49, and the remainder aged over 50. Thus, survey respondents’ ages were broadly in line with the age breakdown of Polish migrants as identified in the census data. Like the interview participants, the majority of respondents (97) lived in Belfast, with other respondents dispersed across various locations including Lisburn, Craigavon, Derry and Newry. They were also highly educated, with 62% holding a Bachelor’s degree or above.

Similarly to the interview participants, they had been living in Northern Ireland for varying lengths of time, although the majority (55%) had been living in Northern Ireland for 8 years or more.

Positionality and reflexivity in the field

Stemming from the recognition that all knowledge is situated and partial, human geographers have increasingly been urged to recognise their positionality within the research encounter and to reflect on how they play a part in shaping the type of knowledge which is produced (Rose, 1997). It should be noted that multiple aspects of the researcher's identity play a role in shaping the process of knowledge construction, such as class, ethnicity, gender and age (Kempny, 2012:42). While carrying out the fieldwork, I aimed to be aware of these factors but I also tried not to allow reflexivity to become 'a rote exercise of ticking off boxes' (Megoran, 2006:628). Instead, I reflected on how my particular characteristics or traits may have influenced the process of data collection and analysis, and I also paid close attention to the specific context in question (see Megoran, 2006:628).

In writing up their reflective accounts of how they conducted their research, Moser (2008:385) asks why scholars 'often choose to discuss themselves in terms of often impersonal externally defined categories (female, white, middle-class, feminist, post-structuralist, a parent etc.)'. She argues that this approach 'tends to address the categories and issues important to academic analysis over those relevant in fieldwork' where a researcher's personality, the ability to build rapport with participants and to navigate social situations may have more of an influence on the research process than their gender or social class (ibid.). While carrying out the research, I was aware of my position as an Irish/British middle-class female in her late 20s, but these aspects of my identity were not always the most important ones in negotiating relationships with my research participants.

Much of the discussion about reflexivity focuses on the 'insider/outsider' dichotomy and the relevance of this distinction for the type of data that can be collected. In migration research, "insider" researchers are understood 'to share a cultural, linguistic, ethnic, national and religious heritage with their participants' (Nowicka and Ryan 2015:2). A significant proportion of the research on Polish migration to the UK since 2004 has been carried out by people of Polish heritage and/or nationality, thus allowing for in-depth ethnographies of Polish communities to be conducted without barriers to understanding the language and culture (White 2016:12). However, as highlighted above, ethnicity or nationality is only one aspect of a person's identity and researchers should 'go beyond the ethnic lens in migration studies' in order to critically examine the relevance of the insider/outsider dichotomy (Nowicka and Ryan, 2015:1)

In my own case, I found it fairly easy to build rapport with research participants given that we often had a lot in common. We tended to be relatively close in age and we shared similar experiences of living in different countries and attempting (and often struggling) to learn foreign languages. The fact that my spoken Polish was not completely fluent and I often made grammar mistakes made them feel more comfortable about their own language skills. It conveyed the sense that I could empathise with them rather than judging them; and that I understood the frustration of not always being able to express oneself as confidently and fluently as one would like. These types of shared experiences also went some way towards bridging any differences which participants may have observed between our socio-economic backgrounds or levels of education.

In her work with Polish migrants in Belfast, Kempny (2012) noted that she was a 'insider' regarding the fact that she was conducting research with people of her own nationality, but she had to overcome perceived differences in terms of class and educational background. For example, being from Warsaw, her accent and the way she spoke immediately marked her out as different from some of her participants. In my case, not being Polish or a

native speaker made it difficult to immediately place me into any particular social group, and made it possible for me to more easily build relationships with people from a wider range of backgrounds. In some cases, not being from Poland may also have enhanced the depth and detail of the data I collected. Participants might have assumed that a Polish-born researcher already knew all about Polish politics, whereas they were keen to explain things to me (a foreigner) in painstaking detail (see also Botterill, 2015:10). However, as I got to know some participants better, I also started to get this treatment, as they learned more about the time I had spent in Poland and assumed that I too was also an 'expert'. For this reason, I tried to avoid giving too much personal information about myself prior to the interviews, but it was often difficult to deflect the very obvious questions about why and how I had learned Polish.

Perhaps the most interesting (and challenging) aspect of negotiating research encounters was the way in which participants often tried to situate me with the Protestant/unionist and Catholic/nationalist divide in Northern Ireland. As my research questions obviously touched on their views on Northern Irish politics and on the conflict, some participants tried to tactfully discern my community background in order not to offend me. For example, in my interview with Janusz, who worked for an ethnic minority support project run by a local council, he prefixed nearly every one of his views on local politics with 'but I don't know which side you are from...' On several occasions, participants tried to tactfully 'place' me into a particular community by asking which part of Belfast I was originally from. This appeared to be a tactic learned from negotiating everyday life in a post-conflict society where bitterness and divisions between the two communities often still run deep. This provides a very practical example of how knowledge is constructed between interviewer and participant in the course of the research encounter, rather than interviews being a tool which can be used to extract objective information. It also underlines the importance of being sensitive to place and context in reflecting on how knowledge is produced.

As a general rule, I did not disclose my political views or community background during the interview unless it appeared necessary to do so. However, on several occasions I found that participants were much freer with their answers when I offered some information about myself, in order to reassure them that I would not be offended by their views. I am from a Protestant family background but I do not practise a religion. In some cases, I met Polish migrants who believed that all Protestants hated them because Poles are (predominantly) Catholic. In explaining that this was not necessarily the case, I often found it helpful to mention that my partner (with whom I live in London) is from a Catholic family in the Republic of Ireland. From that point I appeared more likely to be a person who would have a more balanced or moderate point of view.

As well as questions of community background, I sometimes found it difficult to respond to political views (and also occasional racist or misogynistic views) which I personally disagree with. As I had asked participants to speak freely and told them that there were 'no correct answers', I did not feel that it was appropriate to challenge someone's opinions (on abortion, for example) in an interview. Therefore, if such views were expressed in an interview scenario, I tried to steer the interview onto topics which were more pertinent to the research. However, I felt that different conditions applied to informal conversations outside of structured interview settings, where I felt that I had a moral responsibility to challenge particular views. For example, I often tried to challenge racist views by questioning generalisations made about people of particular ethnic groups. I found myself in the following situation during an evening at the home of one of my participants, where I got into a debate with one of his friends:

We ended up in a discussion about what had happened in Paris with Charlie Hebdo and Mariusz expressed some very racist, Islamophobic and homophobic views. It's difficult to know how to deal with that. In an interview situation it's probably best to avoid getting into arguments and expressing your own views, but on the other hand it was a social situation and there are some cases in which I feel I have a social responsibility to speak up. I compared his remarks about Muslims to

how people sometimes made derogatory comments about Eastern Europeans and Polish people in my presence and I felt a need to challenge it, emphasising that you can't judge a whole group of people on the actions of a few. The others really seemed to see where I was coming from, but as Grzegorz warned me, Mariusz has pretty extreme views... They didn't agree with Mariusz's racist comments but Darek also made some comments like he didn't understand gay people and it was wrong and unnatural (Fieldnotes, January 2015).

In some cases, I interviewed people who simply had very different worldviews and perspectives on politics from my own. As the research aimed to uncover a diversity of views, one aspect of the process was learning to deal with people I disagreed with and to maintain a kind of 'working relationship' which allowed me to continue attending events and participating in discussions. As a result, the experience of conducting the research differed from work where the researcher aligns themselves with groups they share a particular ideological position with (e.g. feminism or anti-capitalism) (see Harney et al. 2016:324).

Negotiating the ethics of fieldwork

Prior to commencing fieldwork, I received ethical approval for my research from the Queen Mary Research Ethics Committee. As detailed in previous sections, the conduct of the research observed standard ethical guidelines, such as fully briefing participants on the topic of the research and future uses of the data, acquiring informed consent, and allowing participants to withdraw from the research at any time. However, I viewed adherence to these procedures as only one part of a wider framework of ethical behaviour in the field.

I did not offer financial incentives for participating in interviews, partly due to budgetary constraints but also due to concerns about how this would affect the relationship with my participants (see Hammett and Sporton, 2012). For example, paying for interviews may result in participants being 'keen to please' and to provide the answers that they think the researcher

wants to hear rather than speaking their mind. As a researcher who was born in Northern Ireland, I was already concerned that participants would be more reluctant to say anything negative for fear of causing offence. In order to mitigate the impact of this, I stressed at the beginning of each interview that I was interested in hearing their honest views and experiences and I would not be personally offended by any negative comments they might make.

Although I did not give money, I aimed to offer small tokens of appreciation to participants depending on the particular situation. If interviewing in someone's home, I always brought a small gift such as chocolates or a cake, and if interviewing in a public place (such as a coffee shop) I always offered to pay for coffee and a snack for the participant. In several cases this offer was refused as some of my participants were in fairly well-paid work and viewed me as a 'poor student' in comparison. As an incentive for completing the online survey, I gave the option of entry into a prize draw for 3 gift vouchers (in values of £50, £30 and £20). These were allocated via a random draw of email addresses and posted to the winners after the survey had closed for responses.

As well as offering these small tokens of appreciation, I also aimed to find ways of compensating participants for their time aside from money and gifts. At the beginning of the fieldwork period, I explored the possibility of becoming more involved with a particular organisation and helping to organise activities for them on a voluntary basis. However, due to the difficulty of establishing a stable contact within this organisation (as it was still in its formative stages) this did not come to fruition. Although many of my participants did not need practical help from me (and commented that they had found the opportunity to talk and reflect on their experiences to be positive in itself) in some cases I was able to offer help with English language or checking CVs.

My knowledge of the local context was also helpful in referring participants to organisations which could provide them with specialist support (such as having their qualifications recognised or providing careers advice) or to other sources of practical and social support (such as meet-up groups or Mothers' and Toddlers' groups). In one case, I phoned the Labour Relations Agency to obtain advice on behalf of a participant whose friend was experiencing bullying at work and did not have sufficient English to make the call themselves. As other researchers have also highlighted, offering practical help can be a useful way of 'giving something back' to participants and showing appreciation for their time. For example, Ehrkamp (2005) tutored Turkish children, White (2011a) taught English to Polish migrants, and Kempny (2010) assisted her participants with translation and filling in forms in English. However, I was aware of the need to manage these relationships carefully so that they did not become dependent relationships and therefore become problematic when I had to leave the field (see Kempny, 2012).

Data analysis

After each interview, I took brief notes on the main points that were discussed and anything which had been particularly interesting or surprising. These notes were used to inform the early stages of analysis and to identify points to probe further in future interviews. The interviews were recorded and fully transcribed as soon as possible after they were conducted, which also allowed me to become more familiar with the data and the themes which were emerging (Thomas and Fielding, 2008:258). I transcribed all of the English language interviews myself but due to time constraints (and the additional time it would have taken me to transcribe into Polish as a non-native speaker) I paid for the Polish interviews to be professionally transcribed by a company based in Poland. However, I read through these interviews carefully after receiving the transcriptions, making notes in order

to re-familiarise myself with the participants' stories and checking against the audio file that the transcription was accurate.

The interview transcripts, recordings and fieldnotes were stored on my personal computer in a password protected file. The interview transcripts and fieldnotes were analysed using the Framework strategy for qualitative data analysis as developed by Ritchie and Spencer at the National Centre for Social Research. This is a form of thematic analysis which can be broken up into five steps: familiarisation; identifying a thematic framework; indexing; charting; and mapping and interpretation (Srivastava and Thomson, 2009:75).

Firstly, familiarisation involved a careful review of the data which had been collected (Ritchie et al., 2003:221). I carried this out by listening to tapes, rereading transcripts and summarising the key points of fieldnotes (Srivastava and Thomson, 2009:75). In addition to reading the transcripts on the computer I also printed them out, highlighted and annotated them. I decided to keep the data in the original language for as long as possible, meaning that I carried out the familiarisation and coding process in both English and Polish for the respective interview transcripts. As interviews involving multiple languages are often transcribed into English, this creates the risk that the meaning of words or concepts will be lost 'in the space between spoken otherness and written sameness' (Temple, 2002:844). Expressions in English and Polish (as in all combinations of languages) are often not conceptually equivalent (Temple and Young, 2004:165) and I was concerned that translating the interviews to English at an early stage could lead to some of the complexity and nuance of meaning being lost.

Following familiarisation, the second step of the analysis entailed the development of a thematic or conceptual framework which may also be referred to as an 'index'. In order to construct this framework, I wrote each theme on a post-it note while reading through the transcripts. I then pinned these to a notice board and ordered them into groups which enabled me to

establish the main themes and sub-themes emerging from the interviews (see Ritchie et al. 2003:220). At this stage I aimed to stay as close to the participants' words as possible, and to allow the themes to emerge from the data (ibid.). For example, one broader theme was labelled 'participation in Polish organisations in Northern Ireland'. Under this broad theme, a number of sub-themes were identified, such as 'lack of civil society culture in Poland'; 'integration as organisational goal'; and 'disunity of organisations'.

Once the coding framework had been developed, the interview transcripts were imported into the software programme for qualitative data analysis known as 'NVivo 10'. NVivo can be best understood as software for data management rather than a tool which replaces the role of researchers in the analytical process (Spencer et al. 2003:208). It has been viewed as contributing to improving the rigour of qualitative research by facilitating the keeping of careful records at every stage of the research process (Bryman, 2012:390). Although I had developed my main coding framework prior to working with the data in NVivo (as from previous experience I had found it easier to develop a preliminary framework through working with paper transcripts), the software allowed for the modification of this initial framework and the addition of further sub-codes as the analysis progressed.

Having previously sketched out the coding framework on paper, I inputted the titles of the themes and sub-themes into a file in the software. The next step involved reading through each transcript and coding the text to each theme and sub-theme using NVivo. This was carried out with all of the qualitative data which was collected, including the fieldnotes. Coding in NVivo made it easier to organise a relatively large amount of qualitative data more efficiently and to easily refer back to specific passages during both the coding and the writing up process. It has been argued that paper methods facilitate greater closeness to the data, whereas the use of software for qualitative analysis creates distance between the researcher and the material (Bazeley, 2007:8; Lewins, 2008:416). However, I found that storing the data

in one place on the computer made it easier to return to on multiple occasions, thus facilitating a closer relationship (see also Seror, 2005:323).

The fourth stage, referred to by Ritchie and Spencer as 'charting', entails summarising and reducing the data to a level which makes it more manageable to work with at the final stage of analysis (Ritchie et al. 2003:230). This involved writing summaries of the key themes emerging from the data and beginning to make connections between them. At this point I began to sketch out plans for the chapters which discuss my empirical findings and I selected quotations which would be helpful to illustrate the key points I had identified. At this stage I also found it beneficial to make mind maps of each theme with a pen and paper which acted as a useful visual aid during the writing up process.

As Temple and Young (2004:164) argue, research which involves translation between languages should acknowledge the role of the translator in the research process. If it is recognised that knowledge is produced (rather than accessed through) the research encounter, then it should also be acknowledged that the construction of meaning is influenced through the act of translation. As there is 'no single correct translation of a text' (ibid. p. 165) care must be taken to consider the ways in which translation is carried out and to write this into the research process. After keeping the Polish text untranslated for as long as possible, I translated some of the quotations used in the thesis from Polish into English. Prior to commencing the research I had a Polish friend, Kasia, who was also a qualified translator and interpreter. I paid her out of the research budget to translate my participant information and consent forms into Polish, and she also assisted with checking the translation of the survey and interview schedule. In addition, when I was translating quotations and was unsure of the meaning, I could discuss them with her in order to get a second opinion. Despite my best efforts, it should be acknowledged that regardless of language proficiency, it is always possible for sentiments to get 'lost in translation'. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge how my role as a translator, as well as a researcher, played a

part in shaping the meanings expressed by participants in this research (see Temple and Young, 2004:163).

Srivastava and Thomson (2009:76) refer to the fifth stage of analysis as 'mapping and interpretation'. This involved producing descriptive and explanatory accounts based on the data and linking the findings to the conceptual framework which had been identified prior to undertaking the fieldwork. This stage was largely carried out through the process of drafting and redrafting the empirical chapters of the thesis and making connections between the findings I had identified and the existing literature. Participants were referred to by their real names throughout the drafting process and these were replaced with pseudonyms in the final version of the thesis in order to ensure anonymity. Keeping their real names throughout the drafting process helped to both avoid confusion and to maintain closeness to the data and participants' stories (see also Solley, 2016: 117).

Regarding the data collected through the online survey, the built-in functions within the BOS software were used to produce basic descriptive statistics such as frequencies. The initial analysis of the survey data and the interview data and fieldnotes was fairly separate, as I aimed to look at what each set of data was telling me without imposing preconceived ideas about what I would find. However, the process of exploring the data and looking at the two datasets became more iterative as the analysis and writing progressed. For example, I used the built-in functions within the BOS programme to produce cross-tabulations examining the relationships between variables that were of interest. Many of these hypotheses were generated from the initial analysis of the interview data (for example, that intending to stay in Northern Ireland permanently may be linked to higher rates of voter turnout) and others were based on exploring if the findings of previous research also applied to the case at hand (such as a link between higher levels of education and voter turnout). The survey also included some open questions which I coded manually in a similar way to the interview data. I found it easier to code these

manually on paper than using NVivo, as the answers were much briefer than those in the interview transcripts.

Based on an early review of the literature, my research had initially aimed to explore how Polish migrants in Northern Ireland participate in politics and exercise citizenship at different scales, and to examine the role of place in this process. Although this early iteration of the conceptual framework did have some influence on the final direction of the thesis, I took an inductive approach to the data analysis rather than trying to firmly impose my initial ideas on the data. Therefore, as Cook and Crang (2007:3) advocate, I aimed to follow a more 'grounded, process-oriented' model of research rather than taking a rigid 'read-then-do-then-write' approach. As new themes emerged from the data, I continued engaging with the existing literature and exploring the aspects of the findings which were less strongly anticipated. In particular, the role of emotions and the affective dimension of belonging were elements which I had not factored fully into my initial conceptual framework. Therefore, I continued to develop this framework in order to more fully explore the themes which were emerging from the data and to incorporate these in the discussion of the research findings, as well as in the conceptual contributions which emerged from the research.

Disseminating research and reporting back to participants

Although the relatively lengthy timeframe for completing a PhD creates some obstacles in swiftly reporting back findings to informants, I kept in touch with many of my participants during the writing up process and informed them of my progress as requested. In the period leading up to the Northern Ireland Assembly elections in 2016, I volunteered to write an article for a local Polish-language magazine which highlighted some emerging findings from my research and contained information about voting rights in the upcoming elections. This was published in April 2016. After the submission of my thesis I plan to produce a summary of my findings in both English and

Polish and distribute this widely to participants and other organisations who may be interested in the outcomes of the research. I also plan to develop the findings of the thesis for publication in academic journals.

Conclusions

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach taken for the research and the different stages which were involved in the research design, data collection and analysis. As well as providing more details of the research sites, it reflected on the ethical aspects and the challenges of carrying out the research, before discussing the analysis of the data and the plan for dissemination. I set out the rationale for adopting a mixed methods approach in order to collect data which is mutually illuminating and can shed light on different aspects of the research topic. Having set out how the research was conducted and who the participants were, the next chapter will provide additional background information about the context in which the research was carried out. This sensitivity to context and the dynamics of particular places is central to meeting one of the key objectives of the thesis: to consider the ways in which the characteristics of place influence civic and political activity.

Chapter Four: Analysing migrants' political participation through the lens of place: understanding the research context

Although small ethnic minority populations have been settled in Northern Ireland for decades, it is often viewed as a relatively 'new' immigration destination (McAreavey, 2012). Rather than a place inhabited by a diversity of nationalities and ethnicities, it has historically been depicted as the site of acrimony between opposing ethno-national groups. However, Northern Ireland is changing. The image projected on the world stage is increasingly one of progress and cosmopolitanism as government agencies aim to attract tourism and investment (O'Dowd and Komarova, 2013:529). Nevertheless, divisions still run deep under the surface, and newcomers find themselves in a place where many aspects of everyday life remain shaped by the history of conflict.

As highlighted in Chapter 2, the characteristics of particular places play an important role in shaping political identities, opportunities and interests (Agnew, 1987). As political and social geographers have highlighted this role for place, migration scholars have also sought to explore the role of place in the migration experience (e.g. Datta, 2011; White, 2011a; 2011b). A primary objective of this thesis is to explore how place shapes civic and political activity for migrants, therefore it is important to give more details of the research context before discussing the empirical findings. The research views place as shaped by wider economic, cultural and social relations (Massey, 1994:152) as well as the legal and institutional factors which are taken into account by analyses of political opportunity structures. As such, it contributes to the wider aim of looking beyond structures to also recognise the importance of identity and agency in shaping migrants' involvement in civic and political life.

This chapter will set out the background that is pertinent to this study in Northern Ireland, including the historical context of the conflict and how this continues to shape society and politics in the present day. It considers the

history of migration to Northern Ireland and the challenges faced by new migrant populations, as well the legislative and policy framework aimed at protecting and promoting minority rights. It explores the current situation regarding migrants' participation in politics in Northern Ireland, including the attitudes of political parties towards ethnic minority and migrant communities. Taking into account that 'immigrants' are also 'emigrants' with ties to multiple polities (Collyer, 2014:56), it also considers the context of political participation in Poland, including the ways that the Polish government and political parties may facilitate the political engagement of Poles living abroad. Emphasising the role of place in shaping political opportunities, identities and interests, this chapter aims to set the scene for exploring migrants' civic and political participation in more depth.

Conflict and change in Northern Ireland

Although violent conflict has largely been consigned to the past, the period known as 'The Troubles' has been the main focus of media and academic attention on Northern Ireland. The causes of the conflict are complex and its origins can be found as far back as the 'loose establishment' of British colonial rule in Ireland in the twelfth century (Tonge, 2005:9). Divisions between Irish Catholics and Scottish Protestants began to emerge from 1609, following the plantation of Ulster by the Scots. In the 19th and early 20th century, the Irish Home Rule movement campaigned for a degree of independence from Britain, while Protestants in the North aimed to maintain their economic, political and religious ties to the mainland (Tonge, 2005:10). The Government of Ireland Act of 1920, which laid the basis for the partition of Ireland, provided for the division of the territory into two separate Home Rule jurisdictions which were to be self-governing regions within the United Kingdom. However, following the Irish War of Independence, the Anglo-Irish Treaty (1921) provided for the establishment of the Irish Free State and for the 6 counties of Ulster to remain within the United Kingdom. This lays the

basis for the conflict in its modern form, which centres on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom.

The conflict is often understood as religious in origin, in that it involves division between Protestants and Catholics. However, actual doctrinal differences are rarely seen as central to it (Brewer 1992:357). Other factors need to be taken into consideration, including 'broader cultural differences, national allegiances, histories of antagonistic encounters, and marked differences in economic and political power' (McGarry and O'Leary, 1995:172). Rather than referring specifically to religious practice, the labels 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' tend to be used in a cultural sense, denoting someone as belonging to one community or the other even if they do not hold religious beliefs (McGarry and O'Leary, 1995:218). As there tends to be a correlation between political affiliation and religious background, the terms Catholic/nationalist and Protestant/unionist are often used interchangeably (McGarry and O'Leary, 1995: 174). As such, religious labels are used as a marker for political attachments and national allegiances (Brewer, 1992). The central division therefore involves 'a clash of rival nationalisms' (McGarry and O'Leary, 1995:218) which leads Northern Ireland to be commonly characterised as a site of 'ethno-national' conflict (Gilligan et al. 2011).

Although this division forms the basis of the conflict, a number of key events have shaped it over the past century. Following partition, Tonge (2005:12) notes that although nationalists in the North suffered discrimination, there was not initially a great deal of support among them for the IRA's campaign for an independent Ireland. During the 1960s, nationalists campaigned for civil rights as part of a broader coalition of groups including Catholics across the social classes (and some liberal Protestants), socialists and trade unionists (Tonge, 2005:12-13). The primary reaction from the government was to deploy the police to stop marches from occurring on illegal routes (Tonge, 2005:14). Until April 1970, the situation remained fairly calm but sectarian rioting and ill-advised responses from the British Army, such as the

events of Bloody Sunday,¹⁷ led to an increase in IRA recruitment. This was followed by increasing paramilitary violence from the IRA and loyalist paramilitary groups (Tonge, 2005:16).

Direct rule from Westminster was introduced soon after Bloody Sunday and peace talks in 1972 collapsed, followed by increased violence (Tonge, 2005:23). The Sunningdale Agreement of 1973 made provision for an elected Northern Ireland Assembly (with power shared between unionists and nationalists) and a role for both the Irish and British administrations in the governance of the region. However, this failed due to the exclusion of paramilitary groups and a lack of support from Unionists (Tonge, 2005:23). It has been argued that the 1970s and 1980s were characterised by the dominance of 'ideological politics' where republicans' vision of an independent Ireland came into direct conflict with unionists' 'integrationist or majority rule ideals'. However, the 1990s saw the evolution of 'identity politics' where 'competing national identities and aspirations' began to be acknowledged by both groups, thus laying the basis for a political settlement in which power could be shared between them (Tonge, 2005:30).

Although violence persisted throughout the early 1990s, the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) ceasefire of 1994 marked a turning point towards an improved political climate where negotiations could take place (Tonge, 2005:31). Following months of multiparty bargaining and the involvement of both the British and Irish governments, a deal was struck which led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement¹⁸ on the 10th of April 1998. After gaining the support of 3 out of 4 of the main (NI) political parties¹⁹ it was endorsed by

¹⁷ 26 unarmed civilians were shot by the British Army at a peaceful protest against internment in the Bogside area of Derry.

¹⁸ Also known as The Belfast Agreement.

¹⁹ The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) refused to be involved.

the electorate in a referendum on the 22nd of May 1998²⁰. The Agreement had three strands, the first of which included the establishment of a power-sharing Assembly and Executive based in Belfast (at Stormont's Parliament buildings). Strand 2 provided for the establishment of fora which would facilitate co-operation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (the North-South Ministerial Council [NSMC] and the North-South Implementation Bodies). The third strand established institutions which would facilitate co-operation and a positive relationship between Ireland and Britain (the British-Irish Council and the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference) (NI Assembly, 2017a).

Following elections and the devolution of power on the 2nd of December 1999, the NI Assembly acquired the power to formulate policy and legislation on a number of 'transferred' matters including education, employment, transport, trade and investment. 'Excepted' or 'reserved' matters (which remain the responsibility of the UK government) are decided by Westminster and include immigration, taxation, defence and foreign policy. As immigration policy is decided in Westminster, the Northern Ireland Assembly has no control over aspects of migration policy such as the numbers of migrants which come to the region and the conditions under which visas are issued²¹. However, it does have responsibility for incorporating the needs of migrants into many key policy areas, including education, health, employment and housing. Since the devolution of powers over justice and policing in 2010, the NI Assembly has also assumed responsibility for policy and legislation which aim to tackle hate crime, on the grounds of race as well as religion or sexual orientation. As a cross-party, cross-departmental, and multi-agency organisation, the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP) focuses on influencing the

²⁰ With 71.12% voting in favour and a turnout of 81.1%.

²¹ Although these conditions were not applied to EU migrants at the time of writing, due to European Union citizenship rights guaranteeing freedom of movement.

development and implementation of UK immigration policy in the specific context of Northern Ireland. It also plays a role in facilitating migrant integration and ensuring that Northern Ireland 'is a welcoming place for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers' (NISMP, 2017).

The NI Assembly can be distinguished from other devolved legislatures in the UK as it is founded on the principle of consociation, referring to 'a particular form of government that attempts to unite divided societies by power sharing at the elite level' (Geoghegan, 2010:21). In Northern Ireland, this involves power-sharing within a multiparty coalition where parties must designate themselves as 'nationalist', 'unionist' or 'other'. Election of the 108-seat²² Assembly is through a form of proportional representation (Single Transferable Vote [STV]) and ministerial appointments are allocated using the d'Hondt system (a formula based on the number of seats which parties have in the assembly). This means that voters must rank parties in preference order, rather than choosing a single candidate as in the first-past-the-post system. The positions of First Minister and Deputy First Minister are held by the leaders of these two largest parties, currently the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Féin. Despite the terminology, both positions are equal in power and responsibility and they must make decisions jointly.

Although the Assembly often makes decisions using a simple majority vote, there are a number of cases in which it is necessary to gain cross-community support. These include election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker; changes to the rules of the Assembly (Standing Orders); approval of the Budget; decisions about the number and allocation of ministerial positions; and exclusion of a Minister or political party members, from holding office. If 30 signatures are collected, MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly) can request that a decision be taken on a cross-community basis through a mechanism known as a 'petition of concern' (NI Assembly, 2017b).

²² This number was reduced to 90 in the elections on the 2nd of March 2017 in order to cut costs.

This governance structure has been criticised on a number of grounds. Firstly, it has been pointed out that the lack of a formal opposition (as exists in 'standard democracies') can lead to weak scrutiny of ministers (Tonge, 2005:44). However, the rules have recently been changed to allow smaller parties to sit in opposition if they are willing to forgo a ministerial position. Secondly, the power-sharing structure has been criticised due to the view that it acts to embed the sectarian political identities which are at the root of the problem in the first place (Geoghegan, 2010:63; Gilligan et al. 2011:256). The need for designations into blocs is due to the necessity of ensuring cross-community support across more contentious issues; but this may make it difficult to eventually move beyond entrenched unionist and nationalist political identities, and may lead to the 'side-lining' of 'other' identities and concerns (Doyle and McAreavey, 2014:468). Thirdly, the petition of concern has arguably been misused to block legislation which does not relate to specific nationalist/unionist community interests, thus leading to political stalemate on key issues (Geoghegan, 2010:63). For example, the DUP has used petitions of concern to block a proposal to introduce equal marriage (despite a simple majority being in favour during a vote in the Assembly in November 2015).

Despite its weaknesses, consociational arrangements tend to be implemented because a simple majority system is not appropriate for the place in question. Although Northern Ireland was perhaps not an ideal candidate for consociational governance (as it is a dual cleavage society, whereas multi-cleavage societies tend to be preferred) it was seen as the 'least bad option' given the need to end a phase of considerable violence and civil unrest (Tonge, 2005:37). Despite its failings, the Good Friday Agreement has played an important role in bringing relative peace and stability to Northern Ireland. Violence has declined very significantly and there are better relationships between communities and the police (Geoghegan, 2010:7). Gilligan et al. (2011:265) also note that there has been a narrowing of economic inequalities between the two main groups and greater agreement on a number of issues which had previously been contentious. Some increase in

social mixing, particularly among the middle classes, is displayed by a 'modest increase' in religiously mixed marriages between Protestants and Catholics (ibid. p. 259).

On the other hand, high levels of segregation persist in Northern Ireland today, most notably in terms of housing and schooling (Gilligan, 2011:259; Jarman and Bell, 2012; McAreavey, 2012:494; Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006). Many residential areas remain predominantly Protestant or Catholic, with only 5% of 582 local government wards considered 'fully mixed' (i.e. with no one group in an absolute majority) (Hayward et al. 2014). Flags, murals and painted kerb-stones act as visual reminders of divisions and territoriality (Geoghegan, 2010:12-13) and there are now more 'peace walls'²³ in Belfast than when the Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998 (Nolan, 2012:71). Although there has been an increase in initiatives to encourage cross-community activities among school children, such as those outlined in the most recent community relations strategy 'Together: Building a United Community' (OFMDFM, 2013) there has been a lack of progress on opening integrated schools and promoting fully integrated education. In an analysis of progress on shared housing and schooling, Knox (2011a:558) notes that the most innovative examples were funded by external organisations (such as Atlantic Philanthropies) rather than by government departments.

Despite the continuing presence of divisions on the ground, there is a strong narrative coming from politicians and policy circles that Northern Ireland is now a 'normal society' and an attractive destination for tourism and foreign capital investment (Geoghegan, 2010:47). Research has considered how de-industrialisation and globalisation have contributed to the development of new types of divisions within the city of Belfast, such as inequalities in income and opportunities for different groups (O'Dowd and Komorova,

²³ Peace lines or peace wall are "physical barriers between the Protestant/loyalist community and the Catholic/nationalist community in certain areas in Northern Ireland" (Northern Ireland Foundation, 2017).

2013). Becoming a site for global capital accumulation is how the city is to become 'normal'; but the focus on urban regeneration and economic development produces new forms of economic inequality and can overlook the lack of benefit for the poorest people (Shirlow and Murtagh, 2006). It is important to note that Northern Ireland is still a 'relatively economically disadvantaged society' and contains many of the most deprived areas in the United Kingdom (Gilligan et al. 2011:260). Although it is not as economically divided as it used to be, 'social class remains a significant fracture that cuts across the religious fracture' (Gilligan et al. 2011:260).

Migration to Northern Ireland: Challenges for new migrant populations

Although Northern Ireland has been home to relatively small Chinese and Indian communities for several decades, significant immigration only began in the early 2000s²⁴. These migrants mainly consisted of Portuguese workers recruited to fill vacancies in the food processing industry, and nursing staff from South Asia and the Philippines (Russell, 2012:4). However, the number of NI residents who were born outside the UK and Ireland increased by 199% between 2001 and 2011 (from 27,266 residents in 2001 to 81,314 in 2011) (Krausova and Vargas-Silva, 2014:4). The expansion of the EU in 2004 brought an unprecedented number of migrants to NI from the A8 countries, the majority of whom were from Poland (McAreavey, 2012). Statistics from the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) show that between May 2004 and March 2011, NI had 25% more A8 citizens registering on a per capita basis than the UK as a whole. Over half (55.2%) of these 42,525 registrations were made by Polish citizens (Russell, 2012:4-5).

²⁴ Although Northern Ireland had relatively low levels of immigration prior to the 2000s, it is important to note that ethnic diversity has long been a feature of the region. Along with small Indian and Chinese communities, Jews and Irish Travellers also represent notable ethnic minority populations (Hainsworth, 1998:42).

As well as Poles, 2004 also saw the beginning of the arrival of significant numbers of migrants from other Central and Eastern European countries, including Lithuania, Slovakia and Latvia. Although not as large as the Polish-born population (numbering nearly 20,000 according to the census data), the 2011 census recorded more than 7350 Lithuanian-born residents in Northern Ireland, along with approximately 2700 Slovaks, 2300 Latvians and 2650 residents from other A8 accession states (NISRA, 2011a). As well as new residents from the A8 countries, Northern Ireland also received migrants from Bulgaria and Romania after the 2007 EU enlargement, although in much smaller numbers than following the EU enlargement of 2004²⁵ (ibid.).

As the size of the ethnic minority population in Northern Ireland has increased, a growing body of research has examined their experiences in the workplace. This has highlighted that they have been victims of multiple forms of discrimination and mistreatment, ranging from the failure to receive minimum wage and other statutory entitlements to verbal and physical attacks and harassment (Bell et al. 2004; Betts and Hamilton, 2006; Equality Commission NI, 2010; Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010; Martynowicz and Jarman, 2009). Migrant workers are often more vulnerable to such treatment than indigenous workers, due to a lack of knowledge of local legislation and procedures or insufficient knowledge of English (Heyes, 2009:186).

Regarding patterns of housing tenure, the proportion of migrants living in private rented accommodation is higher than that of the local population (Doyle and McAreavey, 2014:471). This may confer some advantages, in that they have the flexibility to move around until they find the place where they feel most comfortable (ibid. p. 472). However, the high concentrations of

²⁵ The 2011 census recorded approximately 1100 Romanian-born residents of Northern Ireland (NISRA, 2011a). The smaller numbers of migrants from Bulgaria and Romania (A2 countries) are likely to have been influenced by the initial restrictions imposed on their right to work in the UK, which were lifted on the 1st of January 2014.

migrant workers in low-waged jobs means that housing options are limited due to cost, which may restrict their options to more 'difficult' neighbourhoods (ibid.). Overcrowding and poor management by landlords have also been identified as issues disproportionately affecting migrants (Wallace et al. 2013:3).

As minority ethnic communities have become more numerous and more visible, there has also been an increase in racist incidents and racist hate crimes. There was a fluctuation in the numbers of recorded racist incidents and crimes²⁶ between 2004/05 and 2010/11 (peaking at 1047 incidents and 851 crimes in 2006/07) followed by an increase from 2011/12 (696 incidents and 458 crimes) to 2014/15 (1356 incidents and 920 crimes). However, since then the numbers have shown a gradual decrease, with 1,063 racist incidents and 640 crimes in the year ending June 2017 (PSNI, 2017:4). These statistics only comprise incidents which are reported to the police. It should be noted that some hate crimes may go unreported, due to lack of knowledge of the correct procedures among victims, mistrust of the authorities, or the fear of being targeted again as retribution.

A simplistic analysis of the issue may conclude that as levels of sectarian attacks in Northern Ireland have declined, racism has become 'the new sectarianism' (Geoghegan, 2010:4). However, sectarianism has not disappeared and racism has been an issue in Northern Ireland since before the Good Friday Agreement, as evidenced by Mann-Kler's (1997) study of the impact of institutional racism on Northern Ireland's ethnic minority communities. Geoghegan (2010:12) argues that although sectarianism and racism may have similarly damaging effects on individuals and society, they involve different social processes. Sectarianism can be defined 'as a means of creating, and maintaining, boundaries between religiously identified groups,

²⁶ The statistics distinguish between an incidents and crimes (the crimes are included in the count of incidents). Some incidents are determined not to contain a crime; when the circumstances did not equate to a crime being committed (PSNI, 2017:4).

leading to the championing of the in-group and the demonising of the out-group' (ibid.). In contrast, racism is based on the assumption that people can be grouped 'according to physical and biological criteria' and that one race is superior to another (ibid. p. 4). Although they are different phenomena, it can be argued that the presence of sectarianism in Northern Ireland 'shapes the way in which racism is reproduced and experienced' (McVeigh, 1998:20). Research using attitudinal data from the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey (NILT) has also found that those who hold sectarian attitudes are more likely to hold racist attitudes (Knox, 2011b).

Tackling racism has been more prominent on the NI Assembly's agenda following the Good Friday Agreement and there has also been an increase in anti-racist activities led by voluntary and community groups (Geoghegan, 2009:45). Some of this activity has been led by community groups in areas of Belfast which have strong ties with Loyalism and Republicanism (ibid.). Race hate crimes have occurred in both loyalist and republican areas, although it is notable that a greater number of attacks on ethnic minorities have been carried out in unionist/loyalist areas than in nationalist/republican ones. However, this should be set in the context of the fact that larger numbers of migrants live in unionist/loyalist areas due to the greater availability of housing stock.

Just as the production and experience of racism can be influenced by the specific context, so too are the responses. In his analysis of anti-racist campaign material in West Belfast, Geoghegan (2009:48) demonstrates how anti-racist materials positioned migrants within the prevailing Catholic or republican narratives of the area. For example, a booklet developed by West Belfast Anti-Racism Network (WARN) portrays racist behaviour as something which is carried out only by Protestants, thus grouping migrants together with Catholics as victims of Protestant/loyalist aggression. This highlights the failure of such initiatives to recognise the complexity and plurality of identity, and acts to 'position migrants within pre-existing structures of sectarian division and contestation' (ibid. p. 49). Such initiatives

may be interpreted by ethnic minority communities as a continuation of sectarian politics, which homogenize migrants and ethnic minorities and fail to acknowledge the specific needs and interests of particular individuals and groups (ibid. p. 51).

Legislative and policy framework for protecting minority rights

Although legislation to outlaw racial discrimination was passed in Great Britain in the 1960s (as a means of securing rights for recently arrived migrants from the Commonwealth) it was several decades before similar legislation was introduced in Northern Ireland. There were a number of reasons for the delay; firstly, that the need to tackle ethno-nationalist divisions appeared to be more pressing; secondly, that the relatively small size of the ethnic minority populations led the government to believe that there was no need to tackle issues such as racism (Hainsworth, 1998; McVeigh, 1998); and thirdly, that the Protestant majority government at Stormont was reluctant to introduce legislation which could be co-opted by Catholics in order to challenge the discrimination that they faced (Geoghegan, 2010:39 – 41).

In 1992, a document entitled 'Race Relations in Northern Ireland' was produced by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) which investigated the option of introducing race relations legislation to bring NI into line with the rest of the UK. Influential organisations, such as the Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights, were in favour of this, and a vibrant campaign also emerged from within Northern Irish civil society (Geoghegan, 2010:41). These events, along with support from the Labour government at Westminster in 1997 and developments in the peace process, led to the introduction of the Race Relations (NI) Order in 1997. The legislation outlawed discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin, more than 30 years after it had been made illegal in Great Britain (ibid. p. 42).

The signing of Good Friday Agreement (GFA) in 1998 also marked a significant shift in public policy regarding ethnic minorities, as the Agreement committed to 'the right to equal opportunity in all social and economic activity, regardless of class, creed, disability, gender or ethnicity' (NIO, 1998:20). The Northern Ireland Act (1998), which signed the Agreement into law, was also important regarding the equality obligation which it contained. Section 75 of the Act requires all public bodies in NI to ensure equality of opportunity 'between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation'. The focus on embedding provisions for equality into the Agreement was particularly important because of the role that social and economic inequality had played in fuelling the conflict (Tonge, 2005:12). However, the focus on identities other than religion was significant in indicating a 'move beyond a singular focus on sectarianism as the locus of all discrimination in Northern Ireland' (Geoghegan, 2010, 43).

Gilligan et al. (2011) refer to this shift in direction as the move from 'old pluralism' (which characterised the period prior to the Good Friday Agreement and focused on two communities) to 'new pluralism' (referring to the period post-GFA which recognises a greater diversity of identities). However, scholars have argued that the 'old pluralism' agenda was always founded on a false assumption as there has long been a plurality of identities within NI, both within the 'two communities' and beyond them (Gilligan et al. 2011:256; Nic Craith, 2002). The shift towards recognising a plurality of identities was also evident in the first major policy document to emerge after the signing of the GFA (Geoghegan, 2010:44). 'A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland' (OFMDFM, 2005a) resulted from an extensive consultation process which was prompted by a commitment in the GFA to review community relations policy. The document displays a change in terminology from 'community relations' (which refers to the relationship between Protestant and Catholic communities) towards widespread use of the term 'good relations' (which refers to Section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and includes

persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group) (OFMDFM, 2005a:63).

In a break with the previous focus on sectarian conflict, the document makes a number of references to addressing divisions on a range of grounds (including ethnicity) and the need to tackle violence and intimidation against migrant workers (ibid. p. 4). It adopts a vision of a society 'where, rather than being static, bounded and essentialised, people have complex and unique identities which evolve over time, thus avoiding recourse to 'simple group stereotypes' (ibid p. 7). Although the language of the document was promising, it also attracted criticism due to the lack of means by which to operationalise and measure progress regarding many of the policy objectives which it contained (Hughes, 2009). In the end, the strategy had little impact because the Assembly had been suspended for almost 3 years by the time the final version was published (Geoghegan, 2010:45). When the devolved government collapsed in 2002 (following allegations of an IRA spy ring at Stormont), the consultation process was continued via direct rule from Westminster. Despite the extensive process of consultation, the Shared Future policy was immediately discarded when the Assembly reconvened in May 2007, partly because it was 'tainted by association with the direct rule era' and the newly reinstated Executive wished to make a fresh start (Knox, 2011a:550).

A consultation on the 'Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration', a new strategy for promoting good community relations, was launched by OFMDFM in 2010. The document consistently stresses the potential of a diversifying population to 'develop a better future for our 'traditional' sections of the community' and form a 'more cohesive' society (Gilligan et al. 2011:254). However, questions were raised regarding whether these statements are backed by a clear plan to achieve such aims (Gilligan et al. 2011:254, see also Doyle and McAreavey, 2014). Knox (2011a:551) notes that the response to the document was mostly negative regarding the failure 'to set targets or dates for measurable progress' or to include clear financial

commitments from government. The final version of the document, retitled 'Together: Building a United Community' (OFMDFM, 2013) sets out clearer and more measurable targets including the 'removal of all interface barriers by 2023' (OFMDFM, 2013:6) and the creation of 10,000 one year placements in a new 'United Youth' programme (OFMDFM, 2013:5). There is some evidence that some aspects of the strategy are being implemented more quickly and efficiently than others (Hansard, 2014) but it is not yet clear if the strategy will meet its targets.

Although the needs of minority communities are acknowledged with the wider framework of good relations, specific policy on race relations has been developed separately, beginning with the first Racial Equality Strategy in 2005. Designed to work in tandem with the good relations strategy, it comprised 6 shared²⁷ aims: elimination of racial inequality; equal protection (i.e. under the law); equality of service provision; participation; dialogue (between those of different faiths and cultural backgrounds) and capacity building (OFMDFM, 2005b:8). It also laid the basis for the establishment of a Racial Equality Forum which aimed to involve representatives of minority ethnic communities in devising a plan to implement the strategy (ibid. p. 14).

When the first strategy expired in 2010, there was a considerable delay in devising a new one, leaving a policy vacuum for nearly 5 years and attracting significant criticism from civil society groups such as the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM). When the new strategy emerged, it was broadly similar to its predecessor, adding an extra aim (to safeguard one's right to maintain a cultural identity) (OFMDFM, 2015:31). Generally speaking, policy on race relations has been criticised for a lack of joined up thinking and cross-departmental working (Doyle and McAreavey, 2014; Geoghegan, 2010; McAreavey, 2012). This is exemplified by the inclusion of issues which affect migrants and ethnic minorities in a separate Racial

²⁷ They are referred to as such because they were developed in consultation with ethnic minority community representatives in Northern Ireland.

Equality Strategy but a lack of consideration of where these issues might overlap with other policy areas. For example, strategies for economic or rural development could consider the impact of migration and the potential challenges or benefits, but they have failed to do so (McAreavey, 2012:496).

In sum, the formulation of policy alone cannot ensure progress on key outcomes without sufficient monitoring and implementation (McAreavey, 2012:502), something which has frequently been lacking in policy development to date. Although there has been some progress in legislation and policy on racial equality in Northern Ireland, it has not kept pace with the changes in the rest of the UK (Wallace et al. 2013:3). Although the introduction of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and the development of 'good relations' policy has allowed key issues to be raised, there is inefficient monitoring of their impact and there are also 'concerns that policy implementation and practice have not kept pace with the needs of new and existing minority communities' (ibid. p. 2).

Ethnic minority involvement in politics in Northern Ireland

People from ethnic minority backgrounds in Northern Ireland are under-represented in public life. One MLA from an ethnic minority background sat in the Northern Ireland Assembly between 2007 and 2016 (Anna Lo of the Alliance party) but there are currently no elected representatives from an ethnic minority group, including at the local council level. People from minority ethnic backgrounds are also under-represented in the civil service and in public appointments (CPANI, 2014:5).

When considering the participation of ethnic minorities in Northern Irish politics, it is important to consider the level of interest in political participation among the population at large. Although civil society did play an important role in the peace process, particularly in the period leading up to the Good Friday Agreement (Farrington, 2008:113), it has been highlighted

that the peace process has been largely elite driven and that the top-down nature of initiatives has contributed to a growing disillusionment with politics (Gilligan et al. 2011). Declining political enthusiasm was also evidenced by the falling rates of turnout at Northern Ireland Assembly elections, dropping from almost 70% in the first elections after the GFA in 1998 to around 55% in 2016. Interestingly, voter turnout increased in the most recent NI Assembly elections (May 2017) to nearly 65%, which is the highest level since 1998 (Russell, 2017:3).

Although people from minority backgrounds are not prominent in formal politics, it is important to note that migrant communities have been involved in civil society campaigns and in setting up their own organisations for several decades (such as the Chinese Welfare Association [CWA] (Geoghegan, 2009:51; Hainsworth, 1998). During the campaign to introduce race relations legislation in the 1990s, the newly-formed Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) became the first organisation to represent a wide umbrella of minority interests (Hainsworth, 1998). A number of other organisations have also been instrumental in supporting migrant workers and addressing their needs, such as the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) (McGarry et al. 2008). As politicians were not giving priority to the issues affecting minority groups, these civil society groups positioned themselves at the forefront of campaigns to secure greater minority rights.

The Racial Equality Strategy (2015 – 2025) lists increasing participation as one of its six key aims: ‘to increase participation and a sense of “belonging” of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in public, political, economic, social and cultural life’ (OFMDFM, 2015:30). However, practical attempts to support migrants to engage in politics are mainly led by the voluntary sector or by local government, rather than being led directly by central government. Voluntary organisations have supported black and minority ethnic (BME) groups to engage in policy-making through participation in government consultation processes (Waterhouse-Bradley, 2012). There have also been

specific initiatives to encourage BME participation in politics, such as the 'BME Parliament' run by the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities and 'Challenge for Change' led by Newry and Mourne district council. This project included a shadowing scheme which paired elected members of the council with ethnic minority residents, in order to facilitate mutual learning and knowledge exchange. In 2014, a campaign entitled 'Vote, you are at Home!' was launched in NI with support from the School for Leaders Association in Poland. Replicated in other parts of Europe (and the UK, including Scotland) this aimed to raise awareness of Polish migrants' rights to vote in local and European Parliament elections in their new country of residence.

As well as aiming to boost participation, civil society has also filled an important gap regarding supporting new arrivals to negotiate the challenges of settling in a new place (McAreavey, 2012:489). Geoghegan (2010:48) notes that the wider policy aim is to move Northern Ireland towards a 'normal civic society' where diversity 'of political opinion, race, gender, sexuality, age or disability' is accepted. However, it should also be noted that civil society organisations are often linked to one community or the other (i.e. nationalist or unionist) and thus involvement in associational life may also involve limited contact with the 'other community' on the ground (Gilligan et al. 2011:266). A 2007 survey of 535 voluntary organisations found that they viewed themselves as being "mainly" or 'wholly' of one side or the other' (i.e. Protestant/unionist or Catholic/nationalist) (Arthur, 2012: 99). This may have implications for migrants when they join local organisations in the areas where they live, as it may influence the kinds of interactions they have and shape the new identities which they may develop.

Political party attitudes towards immigration and ethnic minority participation in politics

As part of this research, I contacted all the political parties with seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly to ask one of their elected representatives to participate in an interview. This was intended to probe their position on immigration and minority ethnic and migrant integration, as well as any actions which they were taking to reach out to minority ethnic communities and encourage more diverse representation within their parties. However, the NI Green party was the only party who responded. Due to the lack of response, I drew on existing research and my own primary analysis of political parties' manifestos in order to gauge their attitudes and approaches towards ethnic minority communities in Northern Ireland.

Prior to 2008, little research had been carried out regarding the attitudes of political parties in Northern Ireland towards supporting ethnic minorities and acknowledging their needs. In an attempt to address this lacuna, McGarry et al. (2008) carried out an analysis of the manifestos of the main political parties in the period between 1994²⁸ and 2007. Although a manifesto is a carefully crafted public statement, rather than a true reflection of the internally held views of the party, manifestos are nevertheless an important means of conveying a party's views and commitments (McGarry et al. 2008:108). Their analysis found that, over time, the manifestos of all the main political parties contained increasingly frequent mentions of ethnic minority communities and the need to tackle issues such as racism and hate crime (ibid. p. 124). They note a distinction between manifestos for different types of election, with local election manifestos placing more emphasis on the role of local councillors to get involved in anti-racist actions and to tackle the issues affecting ethnic minorities. To the contrary, European election manifestos tended to have a more explicit focus on migration policy, with

²⁸ 1994 was a significant date, as the IRA ceasefire created an environment where there was a greater opportunity for ethnic minority issues to be discussed (McGarry, 2008:109).

unionist parties stating the need to be tough on ‘benefits tourism’ (DUP) and warning that ‘uncontrolled immigration’ is linked to the threat of ‘crime and terrorism (UUP). On the other hand, nationalist parties tended to place more emphasis on the ‘positive net contribution of migrants (SDLP) and support for migrant workers’ rights (Sinn Féin) (ibid. p. 124).

In order to investigate more recent commitments of political parties towards ethnic minority and migrant communities, I reviewed political party manifestos from the 2014 local and European elections and the 2015 Westminster elections. I included all of the parties who were represented in the Northern Ireland Assembly as of April 2016: the DUP and Sinn Féin (the largest unionist and nationalist parties respectively); the UUP and the SDLP (the second largest unionist and nationalist parties); the Alliance party (fifth largest party which designates as ‘Other’); the Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) and UKIP (both unionist parties with 1 MLA each); and the Green Party (1 MLA, designates as ‘Other’).²⁹

Beginning with the unionist parties, the DUP’s local and European election manifesto (DUP, 2014:19) states that free movement within the EU produces ‘many economic benefits’ but also ‘many economic tensions’. It suggests that immigration puts pressure on the welfare system, particularly regarding the health service and social housing, and that controlling EU immigration would ‘reduce the burdens on our Province’s nurses and doctors’. Its Westminster manifesto (DUP, 2015:16) advocates for reduced immigration alongside ‘a recognition of the contribution of immigrants’ and ‘support for local communities to help integrate those from abroad’. It also states the party’s support for ensuring that migrants have contributed before they can access benefits and public services (ibid. p. 27). Neither document makes specific

²⁹ A new political party, N121, was set up in 2013 by the former UUP MLAs, Basil McCrea and John McAllister. Basil McCrea represented the party in the NI Assembly from 2013 until May 2016, but did not contest his seat in the May 2016 elections. The party has since disbanded and their election materials are no longer available online, hence they have not been included in this analysis.

reference to issues such as tackling hate crime, racism or discrimination, although McGarry et al. (2008:112) highlight these have been present in earlier manifestos, such as their 2007 Assembly election manifesto which stated a 'zero-tolerance approach' to racism.

The Ulster Unionist Party's (UUP) 2014 European manifesto³⁰ emphasises the importance of 'embracing the many benefits that flow from cultural diversity and the positive role immigrants can play in the economic growth of the country' (UUP, 2014:16). They offer outright condemnation of racist attacks and 'support continued dialogue to secure a greater understanding of community concerns' (ibid.). They also state a belief that 'discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation is completely unacceptable' (UUP, 2014:21). However, like the DUP they make a link between immigration and pressure on public services, arguing for a 'sensible immigration policy' which is 'mindful of the finite resources available to our health service, benefits system and social housing stock' (UUP, 2014:17). Their Westminster manifesto states that they welcome immigrants who have 'something to offer' and who 'wish to assimilate and absorb our values of tolerance, hard work and civic responsibility' (UUP, 2015:18).

In a specific section entitled 'our ethnic minorities' they recognise a plurality of identities in Northern Ireland beyond 'Orange and Green' and they 'embrace the richness of our new, diverse society' (ibid. p. 19). They also stress the contributions which immigrants make to both the public and the private sector, such as through their employment in the health service (ibid. p. 19). As well as stating their support for a Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland, they also mention the need to support 'the inclusion and integration of young people from minority backgrounds' and to monitor funding of minority ethnic and religious groups to ensure government

³⁰ The UUP's 2014 local election manifesto was not available online.

support is fair, transparent and proportionate (UUP, 2015:18 – 19). In a specific mention of the Polish community, they state that they ‘seek a memorial to those Polish service personnel who served in the Royal Air Force and paid the ultimate sacrifice during the Second World War and were based here in Northern Ireland’ (UUP, 2015:18).

Among the smaller unionist parties, the Traditional Unionist Voice’s (TUV) 2014 local and European election manifesto is opposed to the UK’s membership of the EU and freedom of movement. Its 2015 Westminster election manifesto also echoes these sentiments, stating that leaving the EU would allow the UK ‘to control its own borders and shape its immigration policy to suit its needs’ (TUV, 2015:9). The UKIP (NI) 2015 Westminster manifesto³¹ states that it ‘recognises the benefits of limited, controlled immigration’ and proposes an ‘Australian-style points system’ to control all migration to the UK (UKIP, 2015:2). It also proposes limiting access to benefits to those who have paid tax and National Insurance for 5 years (ibid.). In addition, it proposes to ‘regularly review the immigration impact on Northern Ireland communities relevant to numbers, school places, health appointments, benefits and crime’ (UKIP, 2015:2).

Moving to the nationalist parties, Sinn Féin’s (2014a) local election manifesto has no mention of immigration policy but it makes several references to tackling racism and promoting equality among all groups:

Sinn Féin is committed to Building an Ireland of Equals where everyone’s rights are guaranteed, free of divisions caused by partition, sectarianism, racism and other forms of discrimination, and free from poverty and economic inequality (Sinn Féin, 2014a:8).

It also mentions the need to ensure ‘that Councils introduce effective anti-racist, anti-bullying and anti-homophobic policies and initiatives’ (ibid. p. 8). Their European manifesto does not make any explicit references to

³¹ UKIP’s manifestos for the 2014 local and European elections were not available online.

immigration or freedom of movement but it highlights the negative impact which emigration is having on EU countries which have been badly affected by the EU debt crisis (Sinn Féin, 2014b:5). Its 2015 Westminster manifesto mentions racism several times, often positioning it alongside the need to tackle sectarianism. It highlights the need to campaign against racism and ‘for an inclusive and welcoming society which embraces all our citizens equally’ (Sinn Féin, 2015:13) and also for adequate legislation ‘to address online bullying and harassment in all forms including sectarianism, transphobia, homophobia and racism’ (ibid.). As also highlighted by McGarry et al.’s (2008:112) analysis of earlier manifestos, they tend to use the language of human rights and equality more frequently than any other party, often in the context of sectarianism and discrimination against Catholics in Northern Ireland. This positions ethnic minorities alongside Catholics as marginalised groups, adding to the perception that they are more receptive to the needs of minorities than the unionist parties.

The SDLP’s local and European election manifesto states an explicit commitment to ‘the basic values of the European Union and the principle of free movement of workers within its borders’ (SDLP, 2014:32). It also stresses the need to view integration as a ‘dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation from all immigrants and residents of member states’ and to tackle the rhetoric of Eurosceptic parties (ibid.). In addition, it stresses the contribution made by migrants, drawing parallels with Ireland’s own emigration history:

The Irish diaspora is a great example of the contribution immigrants make to host societies. The SDLP will always welcome immigrants to Northern Ireland, particularly those currently helping us fill our skills gaps (SDLP, 2014:32).

In a section specifically focusing on ‘race relations’, it highlights that the SDLP has long been a supporter of those ‘from across Europe and beyond who now live and work in the North’ (ibid. p. 31). It stresses the need to tackle racism and to replace the (then overdue) Racial Equality Strategy, which should be

‘funded by an associated minority ethnic development fund and underpinned by updated and robust race equality law (ibid. p. 31).

In a section entitled ‘A Shared Future’, the SDLP’s 2015 Westminster election manifesto states that society in Northern Ireland has ‘moved beyond unionism and nationalism’ and that there is a need to celebrate, respect and share the ‘diverse traditions’ which also exist among ‘new communities’ (SDLP, 2015:14). It also highlights the need for more robust race equality law (ibid.) and for standing up for the rights of all, ‘regardless of sex, race, ethnic or social origin, language, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation’ (ibid. p. 21). It reiterates the need to tackle hate crimes and racist attacks, in order to ‘build a fully inclusive and shared society’ (ibid.).

Regarding the parties in the Assembly which are designated as ‘Other’, the Alliance party’s 2014 European election manifesto does not outline any policies which specifically refer to the needs of ethnic minorities, although it highlights that its candidate for the European Parliament elections, Anna Lo, is a ‘strong advocate for equality and community relations’ and that she is a ‘previous Vice-Chair of the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities’ (Alliance, 2014a:2). In their manifesto for the 2014 European elections, they emphasise the importance of the work of local councils in dealing with community cohesion and good relations, although they do not specifically refer to ethnic minorities or migrants (Alliance, 2014b:3).

In their 2015 Westminster manifesto, Alliance (2015:16) state concern about the tone of debates over immigration, which are ‘leading to a climate where anti-immigration views are legitimating racial stereotyping and legitimating racial abuse’. They emphasise that immigration brings economic benefits and argue for more ‘regional flexibility’ in immigration policy so that regions are able to attract the skills they need. They call for the Racial Equality Strategy to be delivered and implemented (ibid. p. 6) and for the need to ‘preserve respect for the rights of individuals and groups of individuals to celebrate cultural and other identities within our increasingly diverse society’ (ibid. p.

7). They also state concern about the increase in racial and religious hate crime and urge the Executive to develop a 'coherent strategy' to address this, including further legislation on racial equality (ibid. p. 8).

The Green Party (NI)'s 2014 European election manifesto states that 'the principle of equality is at the heart of Green politics' and explicitly mentions ethnic minorities among a number of other 'marginalised groups' (GPNI, 2014a:9). It argues for effective policies to address discrimination on a number of grounds including 'age, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief' and to tackle issues such as 'Islamophobia, homophobia and anti-Semitism', as well as 'prejudice against Roma and Traveller communities' (ibid. p. 9). Its 2014 local election manifesto (GPNI, 2014b) does not make explicit reference to ethnic minorities or the issues facing them, but its 2015 Westminster manifesto makes several mentions of the need to tackle racism. It is critical of the 'negative messages about immigrants and members of minority ethnic, national or religious groups' which are present in some sections of the media and public life. It also supports the development of a new Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland (GPNI, 2015:10).

This analysis shows that the majority of political parties make some commitment to tackling issues pertinent to ethnic minority and migrant communities in Northern Ireland, although there are differences in emphasis. While the DUP and UUP recognise the contributions of migrants and express some support for migrant integration and cultural diversity, they are more likely to make reference to the perceived negative impacts of immigration, such as pressure on local resources and public services. Nationalist parties (i.e. Sinn Féin and the SDLP) tend to make more frequent use of the language of equality and anti-discrimination, making a link between sectarianism, racism and other types of discrimination (such as on basis of gender or disability). They also make more explicit reference to the need to tackle racism.

In contrast to the unionist parties, which tend to support a more 'controlled' approach to immigration policy, the SDLP explicitly expresses its support for freedom of movement within the European Union. Differing approaches to migrant integration can also be observed. While the UUP welcomes migrants who 'wish to assimilate and absorb our values', the SDLP refers to migrant integration specifically as a 'two-way process of mutual accommodation'. In a similar way to the nationalist parties, the parties which designate as 'other' also tend to take a more liberal stance on immigration. Both the Alliance and the Green parties register their concern about the negative tone of debates over immigration and the need to address racism and hate crime. This message also came out strongly in an interview with a Green party representative, who stressed the 'anti-sectarian and anti-racist' credentials of the party and the need to challenge portrayals in the press of 'migrants as scroungers' (Author's interview data).

Thus far, this chapter has focused on outlining the social, historical and political context in which the research was conducted. It has briefly set out the historical background to the conflict in Northern Ireland and how this influences the structure and conduct of politics in the present day. It has also addressed the relevant legislative and policy developments which affect minority ethnic and migrant communities in Northern Ireland and the attitudes of political parties toward the issues which affect them. The chapter will now turn to a discussion of the political context in Poland, also considering trends in political participation regarding Polish citizens' engagement in homeland politics from abroad.

Considering the importance of the Polish context

Migrants' previous experiences of political engagement may influence their civic and political participation in both their new countries of residence and in politics 'back home' (McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011). Consequently, it is necessary to consider the Polish political context in more depth prior to

discussing the empirical findings of the research. Since the collapse of communism, scholars have highlighted the low levels of electoral participation and organisational membership in Central and Eastern Europe (Coffe and Van der Lippe, 2010:479). The experience of the communist system is considered to have played a significant role in shaping post-communist political culture, as the totalitarian state 'repressed all forms of autonomous non-state activity' (ibid. p. 480) and subsequently made it necessary for people to 're-learn political and civic attitudes and behaviour' (ibid. p. 481). However, it is also important to consider the specific dynamics of particular Central and Eastern European countries, as their experiences of communism differed significantly (ibid. p. 480). As Marciniak (2007:205) highlights, Poland had a significant tradition of challenging the communist regime, including the civil society mobilisations led by the trade union 'Solidarity' which played a significant role in the regime's eventual demise.

The tradition of political participation is less established in Poland than in Western European countries (Bogumil, 2012:132). Civil society is weakly developed and the 'artificial' nature of the elections prior to 1989 may impact on citizens' trust in politicians and the political system (Marciniak, 2007:208). However, more than 25 years have passed since the fall of the communist regime and a new generation of potential voters has emerged. Bogumil (2012:132) argues that the low electoral turnout of young people in Polish elections, along with low levels of voting among the population in general³², should not be used to assume a low level of participation in all forms of political life (also see Dalton, 2006). She notes that there has recently been an increase in the number of NGOs active in Poland and involvement in social movements, with 37% of young Polish people identifying themselves with some kind of NGO (Bogumil, 2012:132).

³² In 2015, voter turnout in elections to the Polish Parliament (Sejm) and Polish Senate was just under 51%. Turnout in the 2015 Presidential elections was slightly higher at 55% (Election Guide, 2017).

Poland has a bicameral legislature, with an upper house (the Senate) comprising of 100 seats and a lower house (the Sejm) comprising of 460 seats. The electorate votes for parties in the Sejm rather than specific candidates, and seats are filled by a party list. Members are directly elected to the Senate via a first-past-the-post system. Elections to both chambers are held every 4 years. The President is head of state and is elected by popular vote every 5 years. The most recent Parliamentary and Presidential elections took place in 2015.

In the period following the transition, new Polish political parties emerged from two broad groups: those who were affiliated to the communist party prior to 1989, and those who were linked to communist opposition groups such as 'Solidarity' (Wojtaszczyk, 2007:87). The political landscape has since diversified, although two parties have been the main forces in Polish politics over the past decade: the centrist-liberal Civic Platform (*Platforma Obywatelska*, PO) and the conservative-right wing Law and Justice Party (*Prawo I Sprawiedliwosc*, PiS) (Lesińska, 2014:129). The Law and Justice Party emerged from the Solidarity movement of the 1980s. It places a strong emphasis on pro-independence traditions, including scepticism towards Poland's membership of the European Union. Civic Platform was founded in 2000 as a social movement and became a political party in 2001 (Wojtaszczyk, 2007:87).

The leader of PiS at the time, Jarosław Kaczyński, became Polish Prime Minister in 2005 and his twin brother Lech became President in 2007. In 2007, Civic Platform took control of the Sejm and the Senate and their candidate Bronisław Komorowski claimed the Presidency in 2010. In the most recent elections in 2015, PiS took back control of the legislature and their candidate Andrzej Duda achieved victory in the 2015 Presidential elections. The transition of power from one party to the other over this period of time reflects the struggle between the right-wing conservative and the more liberal and pro-European sections of the Polish electorate.

However, a number of other parties have emerged which aim to offer alternatives to voters, both on the left and the right.

In the 2015 elections, 2 parties which won a considerable number of seats (*Kukiz' 15* (led by the Polish musician Paweł Kukiz) and *Nowoczesna* (Modern)) formed shortly before the election and were newcomers to Parliament. They came 3rd and 4th in the elections respectively. Paweł Kukiz is a popular rock singer and actor who was a newcomer to politics when he took third place in the Presidential elections of May 2015. His party positions itself as an 'anti-establishment' and right-wing populist movement rather than as a traditional political party. *Nowoczesna* (Modern) is led by the economist Ryszard Petru and takes a liberal and pro-European stance. Another party of note is the *Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej* (SLD) (Democratic Left Alliance) a left-wing party which is widely viewed as post-communist. Although it has achieved greater electoral success in previous elections, it lost its Parliamentary representation in 2015.

Polish citizens living abroad have the right to vote in both Parliamentary and Presidential elections, regardless of the amount of time they have spent abroad. In order to vote, electors must hold a valid Polish passport and register with a consulate at least three days prior to the election. Votes may be cast either in person or by post, an option which has been available since 2011 (Lesińska, 2014:125). In parliamentary elections, voting works through a system of 'assimilated representation' where all ballots cast from abroad are attributed to the electoral constituency 'Warsaw I'. This means that external voters have less impact on the overall result, although the potential to influence the outcome of the Presidential elections (where votes are cast for a specific candidate) is greater (ibid.).

Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 was followed by a significant increase in the number of votes cast in Polish elections from abroad. As well as being linked to the greater numbers of Polish citizens living outside the country, this was also influenced by factors such as the introduction of an online

registration system and a greater number of polling stations located abroad (Lesińska, 2014:133). At this time, migration became a particular focus of both media and public discussion, and political parties placed an increasing emphasis on mass emigration as an issue in their electoral campaigns (regarding its negative impacts³³ and the need to address its root causes). Although part of the rationale was to target external voters (particularly those who felt that their departure from Poland had been driven by purely economic concerns) this was also designed to target the families of emigrants who had remained in Poland (ibid.).

Divisions can also be noted regarding voter preferences among Polish diaspora communities in different parts of the world. While left-wing and centrist parties have attracted the most support among post-accession migrants to Western Europe, Poles in the USA tend to vote in greater numbers for right-wing parties (Lesińska, 2014:134). These trends are taken into consideration by political parties who plan campaigns to target diaspora communities abroad. For example, during the 2010 election campaigns representatives of the centrist party Civic Platform focused their efforts on the UK, while representatives of the right-wing party PiS concentrated on engaging with the Polish diaspora in the US (ibid.).

In 2010, voter turnout rose in the US and Canada, while the number of Poles residing there did not increase. This indicated a rising level of interest among those emigrants who had not previously been politically engaged (ibid.). Research on the voting patterns of Poles living abroad (based on data from the Polish Central Statistics Authority and the Polish Electoral Office) supports this assumption. This showed that in 2005, 3.3% of all Polish emigrants voted, increasing to 6.5% in the parliamentary elections of 2007 and 10.8% in the presidential election of 2010. One in 10 Poles living in the

33 Media discourses focused on themes such as the loss of the young and well-educated, educated Poles abroad working in low-skilled jobs ('brain waste') and the role of emigration in splitting up families ('euro-orphans') (Lesińska, 2014:133).

UK and in Ireland voted in the 2010 election, whereas among Poles in Germany this figure was just one in twenty (Lesińska, 2014:127).

It is also interesting to consider the influence of the Polish state in facilitating or hindering the political engagement of the Polish diaspora in both the home and host country contexts. Following EU enlargement and the wave of emigration which followed it, Polish ambassadors and officials were reluctant to comment on the rights of Polish migrants to vote in UK local elections. Garapich (2007b:17) quotes the Polish Ambassador to the UK as saying that to pass comment on this matter would be 'interfering in internal British affairs' (ibid.). However, in the run-up to the 2014 UK local council and European Parliament elections, a considerable shift in attitude appeared to take place, with the Polish embassy in London playing an active role in encouraging Poles to vote through social media campaigns. In 2015, the Polish government launched a strategy which outlines their plan for engagement with Poles living abroad. Although this did not specifically mention political or electoral participation, it includes initiatives to work with Polish diaspora organisations to promote arts and culture and the learning of Polish language abroad, including support for Polish Saturday Schools (*Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych* - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015).

Conclusions

Drawing on a range of sources, including academic literature, policy documents and political party manifestos, this chapter has given a detailed account of the social, historical and political context of Northern Ireland and how this may influence the experiences of the participants in this research. It has also outlined the history of migration to Northern Ireland and the challenges faced by new migrant populations, as well as the relevant policy framework for protecting the rights and promoting the participation of ethnic minority communities. Above all, and bearing in mind the role of

place in shaping political opportunities, identities and interests, the chapter has set the scene for exploring migrants' civic and political participation in more depth.

Chapter Five: Polish migrants' participation in civil society: negotiating the politics of belonging through community engagement

As outlined in the previous chapter, ethnic minority and migrant communities were present in Northern Ireland in the decades prior to 2004. Some of their members played an important role in earlier campaigns for minority rights, particularly when these issues gained greater prominence following the Good Friday Agreement. However, 2004 saw the arrival of a significant number of migrants from the new EU Accession States, some of whom set up community organisations for their specific co-national groups. Some of these more recent arrivals have also become engaged in the established civil society organisations of the receiving society, such as trade unions, community groups and the church.

Drawing on original qualitative and quantitative data, this chapter explores Polish migrants' participation in civil society, including both the pre-existing organisations of the receiving society and those which were more recently established by Polish migrants themselves. Firstly, it sets out how migrants' participation in civil society has been examined within the existing literature and how the present study contributes to this extant body of work. In keeping with the transnational approach of the research, which views migrants' lives as stretching beyond the boundaries of the receiving state (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004), it discusses participants' involvement in civil society in Poland prior to emigrating and the extent to which their engagement has continued following emigration. Thirdly, it explores their participation in established civil society organisations in Northern Ireland, such as churches and trade unions. Fourthly, it examines their engagement in the Polish community organisations which have been established in Northern Ireland since 2004, and considers the aims of these activities. Overall, the chapter illustrates the ways in which migrants' civic participation is interlinked with their relationships to place and their efforts to negotiate belonging in its multiple aspects. It also draws attention to examining the

scales at which relationships to place are developed and how this shapes migrants' civic participation.

Migrants' participation in civil society: integration, identity and belonging

Previous research has examined migrants' participation in civil society, including their involvement in trade unions (Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010; Heyes, 2009; Holgate, 2005; James and Karmowska, 2012), and faith organisations (Jamoul and Wills, 2008; Wills et al. 2009). As well as examining their engagement in the established organisations of the host country, studies have also explored the role of migrant or 'ethnic' organisations in facilitating the involvement of minority groups in civic and political life (Fennema and Tillie, 1999; Portes et al. 2008; Tillie, 2004). These organisations have been identified as having a range of functions, including offering practical support to deal with bureaucracy and other aspects of life in the receiving context (McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011; Mercer and Page, 2010); providing opportunities to share food and participate in cultural practices from the homeland (Ghorashi, 2004; Juul, 2011; Juul, 2014;); and as a channel of communication between migrants and the state in both the receiving and home country contexts (Collyer, 2006; Ghorashi, 2004:330).

Migrant organisations have also been a prominent focus of debates regarding the integration of their members in the receiving country (Mercer and Page, 2010:112). Co-ethnic or co-national organisations have attracted some criticism due to the perception that they foster 'bonding social capital' (relationships between members) at the expense of 'bridging social capital' (building relationships between members and wider society) (ibid.). However, empirical research has highlighted the ways in which involvement in ethnic associations may promote greater participation in the social, civic

and political life of the host country, rather than necessarily acting as a barrier to wider engagement (Ghorashi, 2004; Juul, 2011; 2014; Page, 2010).

Although the concept is contested, scholars tend to view integration as a dynamic, multi-actor process encompassing engagement in economic, political, social and cultural life (Ager and Strang, 2004). It was traditionally understood as a 'one way process' through which migrants adapt to, or assimilate into, the receiving society (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013:869). However, more recent scholarship has portrayed it as a 'process of negotiation' or a 'dialectical relationship' which involves both migrants and members of the longer-term settled community (ibid. p. 870). Furthermore, research has highlighted that continuing ties to the home country do not necessarily mean a lack of attachment to the host country (Boccagni, 2011:90; Ehrkamp, 2005:346; Guarnizo, 2003; Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007:130; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011:1500). Instead, migrants often engage in 'balancing acts' through which they negotiate belonging in multiple communities simultaneously (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013).

Migrant organisations can also play an important role in the construction of new forms of identity and belonging (Ghorashi, 2004:330). Migration can be considered as a 'destabilising experience' as it disorders the relationships 'between different axes of belonging' (Van Gorp and Smets, 2015:72). Co-ethnic or co-national organisations may offer stability by enabling people to meet those who have had similar experiences and with whom they can identify (Ghorashi, 2004; Van Gorp and Smets, 2015:72). However, identities are not fixed and stable; and homogeneity of identity cannot be assumed based on a shared national or ethnic origin. As Stuart Hall has noted, the modern nation is a cultural hybrid (Ghorashi, 2004:329). This concept destabilises the idea of 'homeland' as merely 'a link to certain territory or root' and advocates for a perspective which focuses on 'the processes involved in constructing, imagining and changing identities' (ibid. 330).

Benedict Anderson's (2006) renowned conceptualisation of nations as 'imagined communities' is a helpful way of thinking through the construction of diasporic identities and how they are remade within new contexts (see also Ghorashi, 2004:333; Van Gorp and Smets, 2015:72). His argument states that the members of the nation, despite not knowing each other personally, have the sense of being part of a shared community which is based on the myth of a common past (Anderson, 2006:6). By highlighting the ways in which they have both similar and different characteristics to other groups in the host country, the activities of migrant organisations play a role in constructing new boundaries between 'us' and 'them', which also play a part in remaking claims to belonging both 'here' and 'there' (see also Ghorashi, 2004; Juul, 2011; 2014).

The shaping of new identities does not only concern the relationships between co-nationals and their links to the homeland, but it also relates to how migrants develop new identifications in the host country. Rather than targeted solely at co-ethnic or co-national groups, the activities of migrant organisations may be focused on positioning themselves within the receiving society rather than simply creating separate diasporic spaces or maintaining links to their country of origin. This may be through public displays of culture involving music, dance or food (Juul, 2011; Juul 2014), public celebrations of days of national, historical or religious importance (Ghorashi, 2004) or engaging in 'immigrant politics' in order to improve their situation in the host country (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003:763; Però and Solomos, 2010). Consequently, such activities may play a key role in negotiating belonging in various communities at multiple scales.

This chapter explores how different aspects of belonging shape and influence Polish migrants' motivations for participation in civil society, both through their activities in Northern Ireland and those which are transnational in scope. As outlined in Chapter 2, civil society refers to the networks of organisations which facilitate participation in the public sphere, while civic participation refers more specifically to the activities that people take part in

(such as raising money for charity, campaigning or volunteering) (Ebert and Okamoto, 2013:1269). This thesis primarily views civic participation as 'the voluntary actions of people working together to solve problems' (Ebert and Okamoto, 2013:1267). Although attending an exercise class or a religious service may be a precursor to civic engagement, 'civic participation' involves people aiming to to effect change that will benefit a wider group of people, rather than merely participating in activities for their own benefit.

The chapter aims to illustrate how civic engagement enables migrants to build social relationships and develop a sense of attachment to place. As well as enabling relationships with place as regards 'feeling at home', these activities are also an important aspect of negotiating 'the politics of belonging' in terms of claiming the right to participate in public life alongside other communities in the receiving society (see also Antonisch, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Although these two aspects of belonging (the personal and the social) often overlap, the chapter explores both aspects in order to highlight the significance of migrants' personal relationships to place, rather than simply focusing on the ways in which they negotiate belonging through processes of inclusion and exclusion. Emphasising that these attachments are shaped in multiple places and contexts, rather than simply by their experiences in the host country, I argue that we must attend to the ways in which migrants' participation in multiple communities shapes their sense of belonging and civic engagement.

Taking this analysis a step further, the discussion aims to illustrate the concept of a 'place-based contract' (first introduced in Chapter 1). Drawing on Thomas's (2002) idea of a 'contract' as a means through which claims to citizenship are articulated, this aims to highlights the ways in which migrants construct belonging to civic and political communities and how this facilitates and shapes their engagement in civil society. Whilst acknowledging that migrants may face considerable practical barriers to civic participation, the chapter reflects on how different aspects of belonging (or striving towards belonging) influence the nature of the activities that they engage in.

It also illustrates how migrants' sense of belonging is constructed and situated at multiple scales, arguing for the need to 'rescale the polity' in order to recognise the role of relationships and attachments at the local level in shaping migrants' civic participation.

Participation in civil society while living in Poland

Previous research has highlighted that experiences of political and civic engagement prior to migration may shape and influence migrants' practices and attitudes in the receiving society (McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011). Consequently, migrants' previous experiences in the home country should be taken into account when exploring their more recent political and civic engagement. Based on the survey data, Table 5.1 lists the types of organisations that participants were involved in prior to emigration.

Table 5.1: Participants' involvement in civil society organisations while living in Poland

Type of organisation	Number and percentage of respondents
Sports club	36 (25%) ³⁴
Parent-teacher association	29 (20%)
Local community organisation	27 (19%)
Church organisation	21 (15%)
Trade union	15 (10%)
International campaigning organisation (for example Oxfam, Greenpeace)	7 (5%)
Other	8 (6%)

Source: Author's survey³⁵ (n = 143)

As outlined in Chapter 4, civil society in Poland remains weaker than its counterparts in Western Europe, although it has more recently shown some signs of growth (Bogumil, 2012). Among interviewees, participation in community organisations and NGOs in Poland was seen as a relatively new development. Those who had participated in such activities tended to be young and well-educated, in line with previous findings that more highly-educated people tend to be more involved in civic life (see Coffe and Van der Lippe, 2010).

Ania collected money and food for organisations operating locally while she was a student at university, before becoming involved with international organisations as a volunteer translator. The opportunity to go on student

³⁴ All percentages in the tables have been rounded up to the nearest whole number.

³⁵ Throughout the thesis, all data in tables is based on the online survey only and is clearly marked as 'Source: Author's survey'.

exchanges during her studies in Poland widened her horizons when it came to civic engagement, and encouraged her to use her skills to help others:

Yes, I helped in my hometown and then I did translation via the internet. And then during my studies I also started to go on student exchanges. Thanks to that I met people from different countries and organisations and I was inspired, because I had the impression that people help like that. From that time it seems to me that I always tried to find some sort of volunteering project. I worked for NGOs and helped them, like a volunteer. I participated in organisations like translators beyond borders, from time to time.

Several interviewees explained that they had been members of the Scouts when they were younger. Edyta had participated in the Scouts as a teenager and became a senior volunteer during her university studies, helping to organise events and trips for younger children. She stressed that the friendships she had developed were an important factor in sustaining her involvement in the organisation (see Della Porta and Diani, 2006:115; Hansen, 2004:134; Kelly, 1998:34):

I was pulled [recruited] in primary school and I just stayed, because it's just a different state of mind. It's just those people, whoever stays there, those are people who want to help each other, or help others. They are just different; they are just material for friends, if I can say that.

On the other hand, interviewees also recounted considerable barriers to civic engagement. As many current civil society organisations in Poland have their roots in the old mass (state-controlled) organisations of the communist era, there was often some scepticism regarding the degree to which they represent a shift from the old order (see Magner, 2005:69). Furthermore, Poland's rapid integration into the global economy after 1990 and the introduction of neoliberal economic policies (see Hardy, 2009) led to many people working long hours in order to make ends meet. Iza, a 37-year-old woman who had been living in Belfast for 7 years, explained that the communist regime had engendered a widespread lack of trust in mass organisations, as well as impeding the development of the civic skills necessary to participate in these types of activities. The transition to

capitalism also brought challenges, as meeting the family's material needs left little time for voluntary work.

I'm just thinking of all the years, the last three generations or maybe four, we constantly had to fight for surviving. When you fight for surviving you don't develop social skills much, you just think about you, your family, we're here, we need to survive, we need to help each other. You don't think about other people's needs, you think about here and now. And I think that for so many generations back we had to do it, and the same with communism. That time was even the worst in the sense that you were afraid that people would go and tell news on you and you would go to prison for no reason. So you didn't even talk and you were very careful about what you were talking about, even with your very close friends, you had to be very careful with talking to your family, so you were very claustrophobic really. So we don't have these social skills.

The trade union *Solidarność* (Solidarity) played an important role in Polish history by mobilising large numbers of people to stand against the communist regime. However, since 1990 trade union membership has fallen rapidly (Gardawski, 2002; Trappman, 2012) and only 11% of all employees in Poland are currently trade union members (ETUI, 2017). The decline of unions can be partly explained by factors which have also affected unions in Western Europe, such as labour market restructuring, an increase in small to medium enterprises and the anti-union strategies adopted by some employers. Public confidence in the ability of unions to represent workers' interests is also extremely low (Gardawski, 2002; Trappmann, 2012:2). In keeping with these developments, my survey highlighted that a fairly small proportion (10%) of survey respondents had been trade union members in Poland, although this may be influenced by the fairly young age of many respondents and their lack of work experience prior to emigration³⁶.

³⁶ As the survey did not record participants' full work history prior to emigration, it is not possible to make a conclusive statement. However, a significant proportion of the interview sample had little work experience prior to emigrating, aside from causal work as students. There are higher rates of unemployment among young people in Poland compared to other age groups and less than 1% of under 24s are union members (Trappman, 2012:3).

My survey also found that 15% of respondents were members of church associations (although this must be distinguished from church attendance, which is likely to be higher)³⁷. The majority of interviewees had attended church in Poland and a few were involved in charity work linked to the church, such as visiting the elderly and helping them with their shopping. However, they tended to view the Polish Catholic Church as a 'top-down' organisation which did not invite participation from its members, as Iza explained:

In Poland it doesn't work that way, churches don't really do community work. So there's mass during the week or during the weekend and that's it. If you really need to you can go to the priest for help, because it's a mostly Catholic country, but they are not really into community as much because they don't need to be. There are no other competitive religions around, if there are then they are in the very minority, which doesn't count as much if you know what I mean. There is one town, one church, one priest so you need to be happy with whatever you have.

Paweł was a man in his 30s who initially came to Belfast to study at Bible College. He explained that although the majority of Poles identify as Catholic, there has been some growth in minority religions in Poland since the fall of communism. As a teenager, he converted to Protestantism and attended an Evangelical Protestant church in Poland before moving abroad. He explained that the position of the Catholic Church in Poland has weakened since the collapse of communism. The church played a significant role in resisting the regime, but since the transition it has lost some of its political relevance.

After the fall of communism, many people started becoming disillusioned with the Catholic Church. This is due to the fact that during communism, I think that the Catholic Church had this momentum and relevance in showing that communism was evil, but they lost that after the fall of communism. And that was the opening for more sort of Evangelical churches coming to Poland and showing the relevance of their religious views and also believing in God.

³⁷ The survey did not measure rates and frequency of church attendance, as it was focused on determining rates of active participation in civil society groups (rather than merely attending services).

Research on civic participation has often highlighted the role of religion in helping to build social networks, develop organisational skills and provide a forum in which issues of common concern can be discussed (Coffe and Van der Lippe, 2010:483). Although a link between church attendance and membership of civil society groups has been demonstrated in some Western European contexts (see Wills and Jamoul, 2008), studies carried out in Eastern Europe have demonstrated a weaker relationship between church attendance and involvement in civic and political life (Coffe and Van der Lippe, 2010:483). This highlights the importance of understanding the specific context when carrying out research in locations with different histories of civic engagement and infrastructure.

Regarding their participation in Polish civil society organisations since moving abroad, my survey found that this was much lower than when participants had lived in Poland. Only 8% (12 participants) reported maintaining their involvement in such organisations, for example through fundraising. The interview data displayed a similar pattern. Few participants maintained active involvement in Polish civil society groups, although several continued to donate money to charities based in Poland. However, several participants reported their continued engagement with international campaigning organisations, such as WWF (World Wildlife Fund). As these types of organisations operate across many countries, those who supported a particular organisation in Poland could easily continue to do so in Northern Ireland. On the whole, respondents reported much greater involvement in formal transnational political activities (such as voting) than in informal transnational civic and political activities. This will be explored in further detail in Chapter 6.

Participation in civil society in Northern Ireland

The examination of participation in civil society prior to migration allows us to compare how patterns of participation vary between the home and the host country. Based on the survey data, Table 5.2 lists the types of

organisations in Northern Ireland in which participants were engaged. More than a quarter participated in a Polish community organisation, with nearly a quarter participating in a local community organisation (a slightly higher proportion than in Poland). Their participation in trade unions in NI was slightly higher than in Poland (15% in NI and 10% in Poland) but their involvement in parent-teacher organisations (22% in Poland and 10% in NI), church organisations (15% in Poland and 10% in NI) and sports clubs (25% in Poland and 8% in NI) were all lower than they had been previously.

Table 5.2: Participants' involvement in civil society organisations in Northern Ireland

Type of organisation	Percentage/number of respondents involved
Local community organisation (for Poles)	36 (25%)
Local community organisation (not only for Poles)	31 (21%)
Trade union	20 (14%)
Parent-teacher association	14 (10%)
Church organisation	14 (10%)
Sports club	11 (8%)
International campaigning organisation (for example Oxfam, Greenpeace)	10 (7%)
Other	9 (6%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 145)

While the survey demonstrates the broader patterns, the interview data allows us to shed further light on the wider context behind them. Regarding participation in church organisations, interviewees were less likely to have contact with a church in NI than they were in Poland. Although the majority of the interview sample had attended church in Poland, a significant proportion had stopped attending or attended less frequently since leaving

the country. This concurs with the findings of other research, which found that some Poles felt less constrained by tradition when they moved abroad (Bielawska, 2012:90; Elrick, 2008:413). Several interviewees described themselves as atheists or non-believers, despite attending church due to family pressure when they were younger.

It was often mentioned that religious ceremonies are an integral part of Polish tradition, but church attendance does not always signify a strong faith. Many of those who do not consider themselves to be religious still attend church at special times of the year, such as Easter and Christmas. I observed this directly when I attended a Polish mass at Easter with Grzegorz (one of my interview participants) and his wife and daughter³⁸.

Although Grzegorz and his wife are not regular churchgoers, Grzegorz usually goes with his daughter to the Polish church every Easter. They prepare an Easter basket with some painted eggs and little toy animals and they bring it along to be blessed. When we arrived the whole driveway to the church was full of people and we had to wait for about half an hour to go in, as the priest was doing a short service every 45 minutes or so in order to meet the demand. It seems like a lot of people who wouldn't be regular church-goers attend church at these special times of the year (Fieldnotes, April 2014).

Although I generally did not find high levels of religiosity among my sample, a few participants did attend church regularly. For example, Marzena told me that the local Polish mass was regularly followed by a meeting in nearby hall where attendees could meet over tea and cake after the service. She explained that this could be a useful way of meeting other Poles and sharing information. Other studies have also highlighted the importance of the Catholic Church as a source of support for Poles (Scuzzarello, 2015b:189), particularly those with lower levels of education (Gill, 2010:1167³⁹). During

³⁸ During my fieldwork I also attended a regular Sunday morning Polish mass in East Belfast with one of my participants (Alina), which was well-attended but not over-crowded, unlike the Easter mass.

³⁹ It should be noted that a large body of research has examined the importance of transnational religion and spiritual practice for migrants, such as Levitt's (2009) work on

my fieldwork I had the opportunity to speak informally with a Polish priest who trained at a seminary in Poland which specifically prepares those who will serve the diaspora abroad. As well as providing spiritual guidance, saying mass and officiating on occasions such as funerals and holy communion, he is sometimes called upon to provide more practical support to migrants in need, such as signposting to local services.

For those who attended church in Northern Ireland, the majority attended a Catholic church, and two participants attended Evangelical Protestant churches. Although some preferred to attend mass in their own language where it was available, others attended English language services or alternated between the two. Very few participants were active participants in any church related activities; although several mentioned that their faith was a factor in motivating them to engage in other types of civic participation. For example, Paweł believed that churches in Northern Ireland had been active in supporting the integration of migrants, even if few migrants were involved in active roles within the church. Due to his training as an ESOL teacher, and his strong religious faith, he started volunteering through the Evangelical Protestant church which he attends regularly:

To some extent I think I was active in church. Once a year there is an annual event for the local community, not only for Christians but for people from different places, and I also helped with some of the ESOL classes. At our church we had free English classes for migrants so I was involved in that too, and I also had some paid work through a local community organisation, an ethnic minority support project.

Although trade union membership among survey respondents was slightly higher in Northern Ireland than it was in Poland, it is important to highlight that overall trade union membership in Northern Ireland is declining, in line with wider trends in the rest of Western Europe. In 2016, 29% of employees in Northern Ireland were trade union members and certain areas of the labour market (such as the public sector) are still more heavily unionised

religious diversity in the USA and Sheringham's (2013) research on the role of faith in the lives of Brazilian migrants to London.

than others (BES, 2016). For participants who found employment in these areas (such as the postal service or the health service) joining a trade union was a more natural progression than for those employed in the private sector, where trade unions tend to be weaker. For example, Justyna explained that she had never been a union member in Poland as she left the country shortly after finishing her studies, and only had experience of casual work. However, upon finding a job in a hospital kitchen, she was asked to join a union and gradually become more involved when she observed the union's activities in her workplace.

So I didn't have a chance (in Poland), but I've been a member of the UNISON here. A colleague of mine from the hospital, she is a representative for the union, in the hospital, and I have to say that I do love dealing with her, she's a great person. She organised the whole picket, she organised a BBQ, breakfast and everything during the picket and she is always on the ball, honestly.

In addition, given that employment in Northern Ireland was the first experience of full-time work for many interviewees, they often lacked firm opinions about union membership and joined when they were persuaded by colleagues, particularly when they could see that membership offered positive benefits for others in their workplace. However, other interviewees had negative views which had been influenced by previous experiences in Poland. Participants' political views were also a factor, with some of those who had right-wing views saying that they did not agree with trade union politics and therefore would not join them on that basis.

Regarding participation in civil society organisations more generally, a number of barriers were highlighted. Magda, the manager of an ethnic minority support project for a local council, organised a number of initiatives which aimed to boost the civic and political participation of Polish and other migrants from Central and Eastern Europe, such as a shadowing project with elected members of the local council. She explained that although some migrants had engaged with these initiatives, it could still be a challenge to get larger numbers of people involved, bearing in mind that many migrants

worked long hours for low wages and were understandably focused on meeting their material needs first.

You have different kinds of people and sometimes we thought that we demand maybe too much, because if you look at the immigration now it is mainly economic. You know, you can't generalise but a lot of people who were sort of underprivileged in Poland have come here to look for a better life, and they never were involved back in Poland, so why suddenly here? Their first aim is just to earn money and to provide, which is understandable, for the family.

The pressure of working long hours for low wages was often combined with caring responsibilities for young children, given the predominantly young adult demographic of the Polish population in Northern Ireland. For example, Bożena came to Belfast when she was 18 years old and worked in a number of low-paid jobs. She met her husband, who is from Northern Ireland, at work and later decided to stop working in order to care for their two children. Although she had been involved in the Scouts in Poland during her teens, she explained that her family commitments did not leave time for other activities. Her experience highlights that the factors which facilitate or constrain civic engagement are likely to vary throughout the life-course, as periods devoted more intensely to paid work or child-rearing may leave less time for other types of activity (see Jones-Correa, 1998; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011:1510).

When I came here, at first it was just to find a job and then when I found it I was working too much, 14 hours a day. And then all the kids after that, so actually I didn't have a chance, but I would like to, whenever maybe the kids are older then I will get involved in something, but just now I just don't have the time for it.

As well working long hours, the insecure and unpredictable nature of some participants' jobs was also a barrier to civic engagement. Alina was employed in a factory through an agency, working 12 hour shifts on a production line. She explained that she would like to get involved in a community organisation or join a choir but the unpredictability of her working hours made this difficult to organise in practice. She received two shifts a week

through a rota in advance but the remaining two were usually assigned via a phone call from her supervisor at short notice.

Even when you receive your rota during the week someone may call you and ask you could you be in work as soon as possible, so it's hard to plan your week or even meeting with someone like with you. If I had received a phone call earlier I would be at work now, not with you here.

Low levels of English language proficiency and/or a lack of confidence in speaking English also presented significant barriers to getting involved in local organisations. Dorota, a support worker for a charity which engages with a variety of migrant groups, explained that she had initially found it difficult to speak in front of groups of people. Her comments highlight that a lack of confidence to interact with local groups, and the fear of rejection, present additional barriers even when someone is fairly proficient in English.

I know a lot of Polish people who don't speak English and they have no intention to learn English, or they don't have a job and they stay at home, with children, they have Polish TV and Polish friends and they get interpreters everywhere they go, or they work so hard that they don't have time. I think that they feel much safer in their own community as well. I don't know, maybe they are ashamed, because I find it quite stressful when I need to go out and speak English in front of the crowd and I know that my grammar, my English and I lose vocabulary, and I know it's not good. Sometimes I think that people judge me and they think 'Oh you don't speak English, what are you doing here?' and it's about... I developed a confidence that I don't mind anymore but I know how it was at the beginning.

A lack of confidence was also cited as a barrier to taking up voluntary positions of responsibility, such as a shop steward within a union or as a representative on a school board of governors. I discussed this with a Polish woman, Agnieszka, at an event for International Women's Day which was attended by people of various nationalities. She explained that her English was poor when she first arrived in Northern Ireland, but she saw herself as 'the head of the family' and she wanted to be able to attend parent-teacher meetings and discuss her children's progress. Therefore, she felt motivated to improve her English very rapidly. The school asked her to be on the board of governors, but she declined due to her busy schedule of working and looking

after the children, as well as her worry that she would misunderstand something at the meeting (despite now having a high level of English) (Fieldnotes, March 2015).

Although a lack of confidence presented initial barriers to civic engagement, such participation was also a means through which migrants could build their confidence to engage in wider society. For example, I first met Julia at an event which discussed ethnic minority experiences of civic and political participation in Northern Ireland, run by a long-established community organisation which supports migrants. She first came to Northern Ireland to help her brother and sister-in-law who had recently had a new baby. After 6 months she decided to bring her own children, who had been staying in Poland with their grandparents, to join her. In her speech to the group, she explained that volunteering had helped to overcome her fear of interacting with local people due to the sense that she would be rejected as an outsider, or that her language skills weren't good enough.

When we discussed this further during the interview, it emerged that Julia's fears had initially been intensified due to the impression that Northern Ireland wasn't safe. Her family members had explicitly warned her that she was living in a dangerous place and that she shouldn't engage with people outside of the family. This highlights how the specific context of Northern Ireland may create additional apprehension among newcomers, due to the ethno-national divisions between communities and the fear of repercussions if they were to venture to the 'wrong' places or speak to the 'wrong' people. As she explained:

Well, emm, to be honest when I came here first my brother and his wife told me that there are plenty of bombs and it's not safe to be going out with a child or on your own, so I was pretty scared. I was isolated and they made me aware to not speak with people openly. Even when I was going to work, I couldn't have friends because I was too scared to speak with anybody.

Julia had trained as a book-keeper in Poland, but was initially employed in a factory working 12 hour night-shifts. In order to expand her employment

opportunities, she began to take courses at a local community centre, where she became involved in the wider activities at the centre (such as helping with cooking, cleaning and organising events) and with running a support group for Polish migrant women. She explained that she had not been familiar with the concept of volunteering prior to this:

Community groups don't exist, the word in Polish does exist in the dictionary but it doesn't exist to be honest, in real life in small towns. In big towns like Warsaw, Krakow, maybe Gdansk, Gdynia, there might be some community groups and volunteers, but I wasn't ever... The first time I met with the idea of volunteering was here, so to be honest I didn't really recognise that as volunteering, what I'd done. The girls told me that oh, you are a volunteer, and I said what does that mean?

Although involvement in the community centre had helped her to expand her social networks and to improve her language skills, she was also motivated by a desire to help other Polish women with small children who were experiencing isolation:

When I met people who had small children like me, and the husbands are working and the girls are staying home with children. Because they don't, most Polish girls don't want to rely on childcare, because they are just afraid to give the child to somebody else. That's the culture, I think, unfortunately, so if you are a mother of three small, really small children, you don't have a car, you don't have a driving licence, you're stuck at home and you are getting more and more isolated. So I told them look, why not go there, they help you out with the kids so that's sorted, so in that way it was easier. If you know that you have somebody who can help you even to keep one child's hand and bring them to the centre then it is far easier.

Julia explained that the Polish women's group eventually disbanded because the participants gained the confidence to socialise more widely and to move into employment. In her own case, participating in voluntary work and taking courses at the community centre was a stepping stone from low-paid work in a factory to an administrative role in a local charity which was more in line with her qualifications. This demonstrates how co-national support networks can be a starting point for helping newcomers to participate more fully in

wider society, rather than acting as a barrier to integration as is sometimes claimed (see also Ghorashi, 2004; Juul, 2011:2014; Page, 2010).

My research also found that migration intentions and future plans were important factors shaping migrants' civic participation. A number of research projects have created typologies of migrants according to their migration motivations and intended length of stay abroad (Düvell and Vogel, 2006; Eade et al. 2007; Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski, 2008). Eade et al. (2007) categorise Polish migrants as 'stayers' (those who plan to stay abroad permanently), 'hamsters' (those who work in the receiving country with the aim of saving money to bring home), 'storks' (those who engage in circular migration to and from Poland) and 'searchers' (those who are unsure about how long they will stay abroad). Although economic motivations are often identified as a key driver of recent Polish migration, scholarship has also aimed to highlight the complexity of migration intentions and their tendency to shift over time (Drinkwater and Garapich, 2015; Eade et al. 2007; Parutis, 2014).

Although interviewees' reasons for emigrating were varied and often complex (involving multiple factors such as the desire to travel, have new experiences or learn English) many were initially motivated by the opportunity to achieve greater financial security, either by establishing a new life abroad or earning money to send back home. As finding a job and earning money was often their foremost preoccupation, civic participation was not initially a top priority (see also Boccagni, 2011). However, my research highlighted several cases where participants had prioritised civic engagement from the very beginning, as well as those who had become more involved as they achieved greater economic security and made plans to stay in Northern Ireland over the longer term.

Iza and her husband moved to Northern Ireland in 2007 when her son was a baby and her daughter was of primary school age. She has a Master's degree

in Economics and had worked for a large company in Poland, but initially she stayed at home in Belfast to look after her son and daughter. According to Eade et al.'s (2007) typology, Iza and her husband could be characterised as 'stayers': they moved to Northern Ireland with the explicit intention of settling down in a new place, as Iza explained:

We knew that we are moving and we want to stay here. In the very first years we decided, if we will like it then we will stay, if we don't like it then we will move. But we knew that we want to live somewhere abroad and create our roots in a new place rather than jump from country to country.

Iza clearly saw civic participation as a means through which to develop their social networks and begin to feel more at home in the local area. She found the initial process of settling in and making friends quite difficult. Although people in Northern Ireland were friendly on the surface, these 'convivial' encounters (see Burrell, 2016) on the street or at the bus stop rarely formed the basis for longer-lasting friendships:

So we were trying really hard to invite people. I remember mothers and toddlers sessions were very useful. When you have a baby it's the best way to get to know people, and I remember having different mothers and toddlers' sessions on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Then I was inviting people for lunch, and some of the people were happy to invite me back, and quite often 80% of those attempts were stopping at the very stage that they were happy to talk and say hi, but that's it, they wouldn't let you into their lives too much. And I did respect that, it's ok. And I can understand that if someone was growing up here, this is a specific Northern Irish thing, people are here for generations, quite often they stay in the same area with their family and they are growing up with the same people they went to school with, so their life is full and packed with people, they don't really have room for other people, and that's totally fine, ok, this is the specific kind of thing about Northern Ireland.

Upon arriving, she and her husband placed their daughter in a nearby primary school which had little experience of dealing with migrant children. Iza started volunteering in the school to help support her daughter and other migrant children with their learning, gradually becoming more involved in school events (such as weekly coffee mornings) and supporting other migrant parents who had children at the school. As well improving the

situation at the school for her own daughter and other children, she viewed her activities as a way of developing a sense of belonging in place, which in turn led to an increased sense of responsibility for playing a role in local life. This is further illustrated by the quotation below, which demonstrates how her activities helped her to develop a sense of 'feeling at home' and were further motivated by a sense of duty towards her new place of residence:

When you move to a new place, you need to get the confidence to live in that place, to get to know people, to build friendships. That gives you a stable ground, that you've basically, you feel that you can stand on the ground. And then you think about the country, the society and how it works, how I can be involved, what the country can do for you, what you can do for this place, and you want to become a part of it. So friends make you feel like you are at home, and if you have friends and you feel like this is your home, then you want to do something for your home.

Iza's emphasis on 'feeling at home' demonstrates the connections between the concepts of 'belonging' and 'home-making'. Just as migrants' identities are fluid and multiple, they may also maintain 'multi-layered' or 'hybrid' concepts of 'home, self and belonging' (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011:521). The concept of belonging features prominently in the literature on geographies of home (e.g. Datta, 2011; Gorman-Murray, 2011, Koh, 2015), as practices of home-making are a means through which both migrants (and non-migrants) may generate a sense of belonging to place (Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Mee and Wright, 2009:773). Iza's volunteering can be interpreted as a means of home-making because it allowed her to develop social relationships and find her place within society. Her comments also highlight the strong affective component of belonging, as feelings feature prominently in her account.

Parallels can also be drawn between Iza's story and Mike Savage's (2008:152) concept of 'elective belonging', where newcomers work to 'define [a] place as belonging to them through their conscious choice to move and settle in it'. Iza explicitly stated that she saw her involvement in the school as a way of taking responsibility for integration, a view which was echoed by several other interviewees who were engaged in civic life. Rather than depicting integration as a two-way process of mutual accommodation, she

stressed the responsibility of newcomers to adapt to the receiving society:

I very quickly realised that integration is not about people from here trying to get you know you. It's also about us trying to get to know people and making an effort.

This view raises a number of challenging questions regarding what newcomers are asked to 'integrate into', particularly in the specific context of Northern Ireland. As Iza highlighted, communities in Northern Ireland are often close-knit and some may have little prior experience of newcomers from other countries and cultures. It also raises questions about what constitutes belonging to the recipient society, and the role of the host country in supporting migrant integration. In terms of demonstrating their right to belong in Northern Ireland, interviewees often highlighted their status as taxpayers, reproducing dominant narratives about financial contributions as a basis for citizenship (Thomas, 2002:335) and reinforcing widely reported notions of Poles as hard-working and thus worthy of inclusion.

These statements were often positioned in response to claims that migrants 'take local jobs' or are claiming benefits in large numbers, views which have become more prevalent during recent debates about EU migration to the UK. As a result, interviewees tended to emphasise the net contribution made by Polish migrants to the UK economy. Their responses are in line with dominant narrative of the 'good migrant'; portrayed as someone who pays taxes, claims no benefits and rarely uses public services (Anderson, 2013). On the other hand, migrants who work long hours (leaving little time for other activities or learning English) are criticised as 'failing to integrate'.

Iza raised concerns about the contradictions in this narrative, referring to the challenges of juggling low-paid work with family responsibilities. She highlighted that migrants can be caught in a double-bind where they are expected to contribute economically (whilst often working in low-paid, insecure jobs with high concentrations of other migrant workers) and to also learn English and contribute to society in other ways:

The foreigners are seen by society and politicians as expected to bring into the economy, which means that they are expected to work, pay tax, national insurance, etc. not to use the benefits system, and it's a clear message, in the media and in society as well. But on the other hand, this system doesn't give them opportunities to really do that, so the childcare is far too expensive, and if you are a foreigner and you work for minimum wage, and you do the physical jobs, because the most available jobs are the physical jobs, you can't afford to pay it.

Iza explained that she did not work when her children were small, and that they claimed child benefit and working tax credits to top up her husband's low salary, but that it was impossible for her to find a job where she could afford to pay for childcare. Consequently, she saw her involvement in voluntary work as an alternative way of making a contribution to society. Iza's comments highlight the importance of grounding the narratives of migrants within a wider political and economic context. This responds to concerns that when the focus is on narrating migrants' individual stories, this wider context (and how it influences the relationships between people and place) can become depoliticized (Gilmartin, 2008:1838).

Lena, a former secondary school teacher, had similar motivations for getting involved in volunteering. She moved to Craigavon with her husband when her daughter was a toddler. She worked in a number of part-time jobs in cleaning and retail before also starting to teach at the local Polish Saturday School and volunteering at a nearby charity shop. As well as having contact with other people and improving her English, she saw this as a way of making a contribution to society and to reciprocate the assistance she received from the state (in the form of child benefit and working tax credit):

I definitely have a better life in financial terms and in terms of well-being than I could have in my own country at the moment. For example, because I have a child I don't work a lot, therefore I have access to benefits like the majority of people. I thought that if I am getting something from the state, let's say, for free, (and in my country I couldn't get it, only because I have a child), then I should do part of my work on a voluntary basis, in order to pay that back.

Iza and Lena's stories demonstrate how migrants may understand their civic participation in terms of a 'place-based contract'. Although other participants

expressed similar sentiments in terms of the financial contributions they make to society, they expressed their commitment to place through civic engagement and volunteering. Although Polish migrants have access to social security benefits by virtue of their EU citizenship, both Iza and Lena saw their relationship with the state through the lens of a personal 'place-based contract' which was shaped by their own perceptions of a citizen's rights and duties. While they recognised the state as the broker of these rights and duties, their personal commitments to place and sense of belonging were shaped in their local neighbourhoods through micro-scale interactions, rather than at the level of the nation-state. This highlights the need to 'rescale the polity' in order to take into account how people's attachments to place are shaped at multiple scales, and how this influences their involvement in civic life.

These examples also demonstrate how modes of belonging may overlap in the case of migrants' motivations for civic participation. In both cases, they saw volunteering as a way of getting to know people and feeling more at home in their surroundings, thus developing a personal sense of belonging to place (Antonisch, 2010). However, their narratives also demonstrated the ways in which the 'politics of belonging' (Yuval-Davis, 2006) are negotiated among migrants and longer-term settled groups, with both women keen to stress that they were making a contribution to society and thus alleviating the sense of being a 'burden' on the state through the receipt of welfare benefits.

Similar dynamics were observed in the story of Marek, who initially intended to stay in Belfast only for a short period of time. Living in Belfast for more than 10 years at the time of interview, he became involved in various voluntary activities through his workplace. This included participation in a 'diversity group' which supports employees who are not originally from Northern Ireland and actions to raise money for charity. His demanding job and young family placed limitations on his free time, but a major part of his

motivation for participation was to form stronger relationships with other people:

For example, it allows me to more, I don't know, identify with local people, that they see that it's also important to me and it isn't something indifferent. It shows willingness to be part of local society. It's not like 'I didn't do these things at home so I won't do them here'. It's true that I do things that I never did at home, only in order to show that willingness.

As well as being a means of 'identifying with local people' and feeling more at home, Marek's story also illustrates the link between civic participation and negotiating the 'politics of belonging' (Yuval-Davis, 2006). It is not enough to participate in these activities, but he must participate publicly in order to demonstrate his willingness to others. Participation is not only about enhancing the personal relationship between people and place, but it is also a means of staking out a claim to belonging in a community where the membership of 'outsiders' may be considered to be in question.

This section has explored Polish migrants' participation in established civil society organisations in Northern Ireland, such as trade unions, church organisations, charity organisations and other forms of voluntary work. As well as considering the barriers to participation, it has demonstrated how participation in these activities is presented by migrants as a way of demonstrating their commitment to place, and of negotiating belonging in its multiple dimensions. The section to follow continues to develop these themes through a discussion of migrants' involvement in Polish community organisations in Northern Ireland.

The development of Polish organisations in Northern Ireland

Although Polish diaspora organisations have been established in several parts of the UK since the Second World War (Burrell, 2006; Garapich, 2007b; 2008) there were very few Polish citizens living in Northern Ireland prior to EU enlargement. Consequently, the Polish organisations established since

2004 are in the relatively early stages of development. They vary in their levels of activity and formality, ranging from groups which organise ad hoc events and celebrations to those who run longer-term projects and provide advice services. They also include approximately 11 Polish Saturday Schools operating across Northern Ireland, which offer weekend classes in Polish language and culture for children of Polish heritage.

This chapter cannot claim to provide a comprehensive overview of all ongoing activities, but it provides a snapshot of some of the activities and organisations operating at a particular point in time. As participants were assured that their contributions would be anonymous, it is not possible to provide details of the names and locations of the organisations whose representatives participated in the study. However, by way of illustration, some details of these organisations and their activities are outlined in the table below. All of these organisations were in operation at the time the research was carried out, aside from one which had been disbanded.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ The decision was made to interview a representative from the disbanded organisation as it was one of the first Polish community organisations to be established in Northern Ireland and the former chairperson remains involved in activities linked to the Polish diaspora.

Table 5.3 Organisations included in the research and their main activities

Organisation	Position of those interviewed	Main objectives/activities
Social and Cultural Organisation 1	Chair and an employee (2 interviews)	Raise awareness of Polish culture, history and traditions among wider society. Provide a space for co-nationals to meet. Offer practical support to co-nationals i.e. through advice clinics.
Social and Cultural Organisation 2	Chair	Promote Polish language and culture e.g. through organising cultural events which are open to the wider community. Provide practical support to co-nationals through an advice service and sharing information. Help Poles to integrate and to build relationships with local communities and authorities.
Social and Cultural Organisation 3	Chair	Provide a place for the Polish community to meet and to share and celebrate customs and culture. Provide practical support for co-nationals such as advice clinics. Promote involvement of Poles in sport, arts, English classes etc. and run mothers' and toddlers' groups. Increase appreciation for cultural diversity and Polish culture among wider society, in order to fight prejudice and discrimination.
Social and Cultural Organisation 4	Coordinator and a volunteer/ founding member (2 interviews)	Raise awareness of Polish history i.e. through exhibitions and cultural events. Encourage Poles to get involved in the local community e.g. through volunteering. Build relationships with local politicians and promote involvement in homeland politics (i.e. through encouraging Poles to vote and lobbying Polish politicians on issues of relevance to the diaspora). Coordinate the cleaning of the graves of Polish airmen who were stationed in Northern Ireland.

Social and Cultural Organisation 5	Key volunteer	Practical support for co-nationals (e.g. translating documents and help with organising funerals) and organising events to celebrate Polish culture (food, dancing and art) aimed at both Poles and wider society.
Social and Cultural Organisation 6	Chair and a volunteer (2 interviews)	Organise commemorations of important days in Polish history (such as Independence Day and Constitution Day).
Polish Saturday School 1	Teacher and Deputy Director (2 interviews)	Enable children of Polish heritage to maintain their language skills and to learn about the history, geography, culture and traditions of Poland.
Polish Saturday School 2	Director (informal conversation and visit to the school)	Enable children of Polish heritage to maintain their language skills and to learn about the history, geography, culture and traditions of Poland.

Source: Author's interview data

Interviewees explained that the establishment of these organisations tended to begin through activities that were organised on an informal, ad hoc basis without a wider strategic plan. However, over time several of these organisations had become more formalised and began to regularly carry out advice work or to organise cultural events. Damian explained that the initial impulse to set up an organisation came from participation in a one-off cultural event in 2006. Although the initial intention was to raise awareness about Poland and Polish culture, the group soon adopted a more practical role in supporting other Polish migrants:

It was spontaneous, based on an impulse, and that's it. I think our first idea was to create a short exhibition about Poland. So we had this idea to bring pictures of Poland and organise this exhibition at City Hall, so people can see where we're coming from. Then we had a quiz, then we added food and then we ended up having the first edition of Polish picnic in Botanic gardens, for approximately 3500 participants. And I think that was actually a moment when we discovered what our main aim should look like, because people were coming to our stand and asking us for welfare advice, advice from different avenues of your day to day life. So shortly after the Polish picnic we decided to set our drop-in centre which was open every Saturday between 12.00 and 3.30 pm. It was still on a

voluntary basis, so basically for the first two years we were able to serve around 3500 clients, just on Saturdays on a voluntary basis. Basically, it was so intense that after a year and a half of not having a free Saturday we decided that we have to, you know, take the whole project up to a more professional level, because you can't really, you know, have another full-time job without having any financial support and deliver this just on Saturdays. So we began a charity.

Dorota was an ethnic minority support worker for a children's charity and worked with a lot of migrant families. She had initially been employed as a Polish speaker because of the high demand from Polish families, but she explained that now most of her clients were refugee and asylum-seeking families, mostly from African countries such as Sudan or Somalia. As the Polish community has become more established, she believed that many migrants received information through their social networks or had become more familiar with local services, and therefore were less reliant on formal advice services. However, Agata, the chair of a Polish community organisation, had the view that there was still a need for advice work and signposting to relevant public services and agencies.

I think there are still people who need very practical help, you know, and access to some services. We started to have people phoning us and someone has a child who needs some sort of, let's say, counselling and people are not sure how to access the services even. I would think just go to the GP or something but it seems not to be that easy, so I think there is still a need for someone physically to signpost people to the right places. So advice work [is necessary] as well.

Although a few organisations had received small-scale government funding in order to provide regular advice work, to run projects (for example supporting victims of hate crime), and to organise events such as Polish Cultural Week, the majority of this work was being done on a voluntary basis. Justyna, a volunteer in another Polish organisation, explained that she often provided practical help on an 'on call' basis, for example translating documents or helping to organise funerals.

So that's mostly dealing with someone who is in need and things like that. It's just general, on call, as well, like if you can meet with this or such and such person, who can't for example get their taxes sorted or things like

that. You would take a look at a letter and oh yeah, maybe one sentence wouldn't be clear enough to understand for another person and you just would translate it, so that's you know, they are wee tiny things.

As well as organisations which offer practical help to Polish migrants on a wider basis, approximately 11 Polish Saturday Schools have been established across Northern Ireland. They provide an extra day of school for children to learn Polish language along with other core subjects such as history and geography. The importance of language in maintaining a sense of belonging to the home country has been highlighted in studies of other diaspora communities, such as Mercer and Page's (2010:126) study of Tanzanian and Cameroonian home associations. Basia, a teacher at one of the schools, explained that this was an important way of enabling children to explore their Polish roots and identity:

I think people, well children, have to know their roots and the country they come from. They don't have to ever come back there if they don't want to do it, they don't have to know very much about the history or anything, but generally they have to know where they are from or where their parents are from, because it is a part of their identity. They can choose to, maybe later on, to know more about Poland or not, but we have to give them the choice.

Julia, whose three children attended one of the schools, believed that bilingualism and additional subject knowledge conferred educational advantages beyond simply keeping in touch with their Polish roots.

I wanted to have them to be able to read and write and I knew that ok, I can do some stuff with them but not everything. There is mostly Polish language and Polish history and geography (at the Saturday school), it also helps in the [mainstream secondary] school and because of that my oldest one is now doing a GCSE in Polish language and he's really good at Geography and History. Actually the teacher told me that she knows that Kamil is better than she is, because he has much more information than she has.

Some parents decided not to send their children to Polish Saturday schools because they thought that five days per week in school was already enough, or they preferred the children to be involved in other types of activities (such as music or sport) over the weekend. In some cases, parents thought that it

was sufficient to teach their children Polish language and history at home. However, many parents believed that the schools provided a useful way of promoting bilingualism among their children, which they saw as conferring advantages later in life even if they did not return to live in Poland.

As well as offering educational benefits and being a way of keeping children in touch with their roots and Polish heritage, the schools provided another means through which migrants could further their strategy of 'intentional unpredictability' (Eade et al. 2007). This concept describes how plans for the future can remain open and fluid, shifting in response to changes in circumstances in both the home and the host country. For some parents, enrolling their children in these schools offered a safety net should they decide to return to Poland and place the child back in the education system. One of the schools I visited was registered with the Polish Department for Education and aimed to equip children to be able to return to the Polish school system (and to take Polish state exams if they wish). Other schools focused on promoting knowledge of Polish language, culture and traditions in a more informal and less structured way.

Many of the teachers at the Saturday schools are trained in the Polish system but tended to be working outside their profession in Northern Ireland, due to the difficulty of having their teaching qualifications recognised. As one teacher explained, working at the school allows them to keep using their skills and keep up to date with changes in the Polish curriculum, putting them in a better position for securing a teaching job should they decide to return. However, she also stressed that the main motive for her personally was to contribute something to the community and to be part of 'something bigger'. Although the work at her school was paid (as parents pay a relatively small weekly fee for each child) she received minimum wage and had little money left after paying for petrol and buying materials for the lessons (Fieldnotes, May 2015).

Those who were responsible for establishing or running Polish Saturday schools and other migrant organisations tended to be highly educated (mainly to Master's degree level) and to speak fluent English, which reflects the findings of Mercer and Page's (2010) research on African diaspora associations. Studies of migrant worker organising in London (Jamoul and Wills, 2008; Wills et al. 2010) found that many of those who were highly involved in civic and political activism had been in important positions back home (such as religious leaders), and this participation helped them to cope with the experience of deskilling in the receiving society. In the context of my research, the majority of those who were running organisations also had professional jobs (such as interpreting or various kinds of office-based work), although they tended to start out in a low-skilled job before finding something more in line with their qualifications. In many cases, participants had little work experience upon arrival in Northern Ireland (due to leaving Poland shortly after finishing university), and saw voluntary work as a way of developing their skills and experience as well as helping other people.

For example, Alicja came to Northern Ireland to do a Master's degree after completing her Bachelors in Poland. After her Master's she worked in hospitality and as a letting agent, but began chairing a local Polish organisation on a voluntary basis. She continued with this voluntary work after finding a full-time paid position as an ethnic minority support worker with a local NGO. As well as seeing voluntary work as an opportunity to develop herself, she viewed it as a way of contributing to the community. The theme of wanting to help others or to be part of 'something bigger' emerged strongly from the interview:

To be honest with you, at the time when I finished Uni I was kinda looking for a place for myself, I was working in hospitality and stuff, and I thought I would rather do something to utilise my skills. I thought it would be a good way to do something a bit more challenging than what I was doing for money. And that's how I started, really, and I do enjoy it, as I said there is no money from it, but it's, yeah, doing something for the community, is the bit that kinda motivates me.

Studies of civic and political participation have often highlighted a gender gap regarding the lower participation levels of women (Coffe and Van der Lippe: 2010:483). However, many of the organisations involved in my research were run by women, and women appeared to be very active in organising and participating in their activities. In both of the Polish Saturday Schools that I visited, the vast majority of the teachers were female along with both school principals. High levels of participation in civic activity among migrant women were also observed in McIlwaine and Bermudez's (2011:1508) study of Columbians in London. Their survey found that 37% of women were active in this way, compared to 22% of men (ibid.). Several female interviewees worked part-time after having children, and in some cases this gave them more flexibility to engage in organisations to a greater extent than men. However, gender differences could be observed in the types of activities that men and women were most commonly engaged in. For example, women were much more prominent in the Polish Saturday schools and in organising cultural activities (such as dancing and food sharing) whereas men appeared to be more engaged in historical commemorations (which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter).

In McIlwaine and Bermudez's (2011:1508) research, working class women were the most likely to be actively involved in co-ethnic/national organisations. This was because they tended to be in most need of their services, and then become members after receiving help from them. During my fieldwork, informal conversations revealed that due to the particular historical trajectory of Poland under communism, Polish migrants' understandings of class often differed from those of people in Northern Ireland and the UK more broadly. For example, there was a perception that after the fall of communism, Polish society had rapidly divided into 'rich' and 'poor', and the idea of a 'middle class' was still a relatively recent development. Trevena (2011) and Eade et al. (2007) have noted the complexity of the issue of class among Polish migrants as many of those working in low-skilled jobs in the UK are university graduates. Their education offers them a certain amount of 'cultural capital' in their home

country although this may not correspond to a higher level of earnings (Trevena, 2011:77). Their level of education may not confer immediate advantages upon arrival in the UK, but there is some evidence of occupational mobility and a willingness to put up with lower-skilled work in the hope that it will lead to something better in the future (Parutis, 2014).

Whilst taking these points in consideration, the majority of those who were active in leading Polish organisations in Northern Ireland could be described as from 'middle-class' backgrounds. They tended to be highly educated and held professional jobs in Northern Ireland (even if this had often not been the case on their arrival). Among migrants concentrated in lower-skilled sectors of the economy, the long hours of work and the lack of opportunities to develop English language skills (and acquire other forms of social and cultural capital) acted as a barrier to leadership in these organisations, even if they participated in their activities or used their services. English language skills were often required in order to give help and support to other migrants, as much of the advice work carried out by the organisations involved linking migrants with local agencies and being able to understand and translate documentation.

Polish community organisations, civic participation and the 'politics of belonging'

As highlighted previously in this chapter, the decision to get more involved in community life was often linked to shifting migration intentions, as some participants came to the conclusion that they would not be returning to Poland in the short-term. Adam, a founding member of a Polish organisation, arrived in Belfast in 2004 in order to join friends from his university degree who were already living and working there. His original plan was to stay for a few years in order to send money home to his wife and new baby. After working in various manual jobs through an agency he found more stable employment in an office and gradually decided that it would be better to stay

in Belfast over the longer-term, at which point his family moved to join him. As his initial focus was on earning money to send back to Poland, his involvement in voluntary work and migrant organisations did not start until much later, as he explained:

Most of us, including myself, when we came here, we felt a lot of bitterness and hostility towards our country we left. It wasn't exactly a choice, we didn't come here, or most of us didn't come here for a challenge, to take a challenge. That would be fair enough, you can leave your country because you want some challenge and you want to seek other experiences. It wasn't like that, you were more or less forced to, so you know, over here you had to make your living. You know the concept of Maslow's pyramid of needs? First you have to satisfy your basic needs, and it took me a while, it took me a few years, but eventually I was ready to skip to an extra floor.

Together with a group of friends, he decided to set up a Polish community organisation which has links to a political movement in Poland. As well as engaging with homeland politics and building relationships with local politicians in order to discuss issues which affect the Polish population in Northern Ireland, they have also organised events and exhibitions to promote awareness of key events in Polish history among both Poles and the wider community.

In their research on Yugoslav diaspora organisations in the Netherlands, Van Gorp and Smets (2015:77) distinguish between 'mixed diaspora organisations' (which aim their activities at a broad audience) and 'exclusive diaspora organisations' (which target their activities at specific diaspora groups). The Polish organisations I engaged with described their aims as somewhere along a continuum between these two extremes, although the majority viewed one of their primary roles as building links with wider society. Adam explained that developing wider relationships was one of his key motivations for helping to set up the organisation. He explained that they did not view themselves primarily as an 'ethnic' or 'co-national' organisation but rather as a vehicle through which to make connections with other communities in Northern Ireland:

Being a part of society is also somehow reaching out to the people. I think I will describe an example. A lot of times, for lots and lots of Polish people I know, life is work – home – work – home, occasionally school, and that's about it. I know that a while ago, in order to integrate somehow, and to be a part of society I needed to devote a bit of my time to any sort of volunteering, doing something for local people. Maybe that way I can sort of feel to fit into it a little bit more.

As well as building social networks and developing a sense of belonging through civic participation, Adam was also motivated by what he saw as the need to improve the public image of Polish migrants, particularly in light of claims that migrants were 'taking British jobs' or having a negative impact on community cohesion. Consequently, his organisation initiated a project to encourage Poles to volunteer in local community groups:

I believe that it's the best possible way of integrating Polish guys into local society and to build some positive image. The guys do not only come and take the local jobs, but actually do something for the local community they live in.

The focus on building relationships between communities was also emphasised by the chair of another Polish organisation, Agata, during an event they held to launch a new project to support victims of hate crime.

She stressed that they wanted the association to be more focused on bringing people together rather than just being an organisation for Poles, she kept talking about bringing together 'Irish' and 'Polish' and her colleague eventually corrected her a few times, 'perhaps you should say 'Northern Irish', it was a little bit awkward! They are aiming to have all their information and website in both languages so it is accessible to everyone. She also mentioned that it wasn't just about bringing together 'Polish' and 'Irish' but the whole range of groups in Northern Ireland. She mentioned that there were quite a few mixed race children attending Polish Saturday School and it seems to be the case that there are a lot of migrants, Polish and others, in relationships with people from other countries' (Fieldnotes, February 2015)

The above quotation highlights the challenges which migrant organisations may encounter in the Northern Ireland context, as they aim for 'integration' into a still deeply divided society. If organisations see building relationships with 'local' communities as one of their key aims, then they have to learn how to negotiate the complexities of the local landscape and find their place in it.

A number of participants expressed the view that it was not the role of local communities to adapt to migrants, but that 'we' have to fit in with 'you'. However, such a static view of community and identity ignores the multiple and fluid nature of identities in any given society, rather than a simple binary between 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' or 'local' and 'migrant'.

The activities of these organisations should also be set in the context of recent growing anti-immigration sentiment and negative media representations of Eastern European migrants, for example as 'stealing jobs' from locals or taking benefits. As a result, while viewing their activities as building relationships with 'local' communities and helping them to feel a sense of belonging, participants also tended to view their activities as a way of providing positive representations of Polish culture. They often presented these as a direct response to the negative stereotyping of Polish migrants in the media, such as in the recent debates about EU migrants' rights to claim benefits. For example, several participants highlighted the role of Polish Saturday Schools as a useful 'mobilising point' from which Poles can become involved in local festivals and celebrations, such as participation in a St Patrick's Day parade, thus publicly demonstrating their right to belong alongside other communities in Northern Ireland.

Interviewees had generally positive experiences of living in Northern Ireland and felt that a lot of the negativity towards them was coming from the media, rather than directly from people on the street. However, several participants recounted direct experiences of hostility and discrimination, such as being sworn at, instructed to speak English in public or told by strangers to 'go home'. Justyna explained that although she felt generally happy in living in Craigavon, experiencing a few of these incidents had shaken her sense of belonging and occasionally made her question if she should stay over the longer-term:

Emm, not that long ago we've been walking at the.... We went to Tesco, it's really handy from here, and we've been talking Polish, quite loud, because we are loud, and there's been a gentleman walking in front of us

and he's just 'fucking Polish' – things like that would hurt you, but you have to live, I mean, that was the recent one but you have to live with it.

While such negative experiences can contribute to the creation of an environment where migrants feel discouraged to participate in public life, it can also motivate them to challenge these stereotypes through participation in activities which aim to alter the public face of migration, and therefore enable them to stake out their own claims to belonging (see also Finlay et al. (2017) on young Muslims' political participation in Scotland).

Justyna expressed this sentiment in her rationale for helping to organise several public events hosted by a Polish community organisation over the past year, including a traditional Polish Christmas celebration, a party for International Children's Day and a commemoration of the life of Pope John Paul II:

We are showing our traditions, you know, that we are not only taking peoples' jobs and that we've got our own background, that we are not coming here only to... I don't know, live on the benefits, that we've got a culture and that it's a pretty good culture, that we are civilised people and we can join into the community and that we can mix with the community, just those things.

Although several interviewees had experienced incidents of verbal abuse or harassment, there was also a tendency to play down their significance or to hesitate to condemn them outright. This form of cognitive dissonance is expressed in the quotation from Damian below:

Just to mention that I never had any personal bad experience in Northern Ireland. Maybe once or twice someone approached me in the street and said I should go back home, or something like that, but I never faced any bad experience or negative experience.

On discussing this issue further with Justyna, she stated that although the local population should be more tolerant, she also thought that some of the responsibility for these incidents lay with Poles themselves.

I mean, that's quite a lot of work even from us, we shouldn't be isolating, we shouldn't be arguing, we should be quieter I would say. Because we are loud and we draw attention and everything, so I think there is a lot to be done even

on our side, that we have to assimilate with local people more as well, we shouldn't have to be as loud. I'm sort of trying to encourage people to be more civilised as well.

These findings correspond with research on the experiences of other CEE migrant groups which also found the tendency to play down or deny incidents of discrimination (Fox et al. 2015). Fox et al. (2015:730) argue that playing down discrimination is a means of coping with the 'status degradation' which many CEE migrants experience as they work in jobs below their level of qualifications or are treated unfairly because of their nationality. Denying discrimination can also be used as a tactic to emphasise the similarities between the migrant group and the host population, which may also involve ways of marking out Poles as having a higher status than other migrant groups (ibid.).

As well as a hesitancy among some participants to strongly condemn incidents of harassment and discrimination perpetrated against Poles, some interviewees were keen to emphasise the similarity between Polish and Irish culture in terms of a common religious background and shared European heritage (see also Juul, 2011;2014). Examples of such 'boundary-maintenance' (Brubaker, 2005:6) often involved distinguishing between Poles, as European migrants, and others as non-European migrants. This occasionally involved explicit references to racial or religious differences, such as comparing the Christian heritage of Poland to the Muslim heritage of other some migrant groups in the UK. The financial contributions made by Polish migrants were often emphasised, along with their reputation for being 'hard-working', which Bartek used to distinguish Poles from other 'less deserving' migrants.

I can see in the United Kingdom loads of the immigrants just coming over here and claiming benefits, never worked a single day and still claim benefits. Most guys from the Polish community work hard, so I'm not happy when I see guys coming over here and just sitting, doing absolutely nothing and claiming benefits. And after that we need to listen to all those things about stealing your jobs and milking benefits, we are working hard but we can understand guys looking at the other immigrants sitting doing nothing.

The desire to emphasise their identification with local communities was also demonstrated through the celebration of historically important events in Poland's history. For example, several recent projects, specifically designed to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain, have focused on the involvement of Polish pilots in order to emphasise their long-standing connections and contributions to British society.

The mural displayed in Figure 5.1 was created through collaboration between a group of young Polish people and a group of young people from the Lower Shankill area, a traditionally unionist/Protestant area of Belfast. Although some representatives of Polish community organisations were involved in the project, it was coordinated by a voluntary sector worker based in the Lower Shankill Area. Speaking to him informally at the mural's launch event, he explained that the success of the project was very much dependent on understanding the dynamics of particular places, as a mural commemorating British and Polish soldiers would not have been welcome in Catholic/nationalist areas of the city. The location of the mural was also significant given that the majority of hate crimes have taken place in Protestant/unionist areas. Therefore, an aim of the project (funded by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive) was to emphasise the common history of these two communities in response to the discrimination and harassment which some Poles had experienced (Fieldnotes, September 2015).

The emphasis on a shared European history, conveyed through the mural, acts to reimagine the boundaries around loyalist and Polish communities in Belfast. In doing so, it reshapes the boundaries of 'us' and 'them', but it also creates new 'outsiders' by reinforcing the European identity of Poles against the non-European other. It also challenges the typical association of Poles with the nationalist community (due to the link with Catholicism)⁴¹ by

⁴¹ Svašek (2009) and Kempny (2013) have both noted how Poles in Northern Ireland are discursively positioned alongside Catholic/nationalist communities due to the perception of their shared religious heritage. Although the reality is often much more complex, religious affiliation in Northern Ireland still serves as a marker for political views.

making an explicit link between 'Polishness' and 'Britishness', thus emphasising that the two communities have more in common than some people might think. Although the project is clearly aimed at educating the public and promoting good community relations, it can also be viewed as an example of what Cresswell (1996) refers to as the 'darker side of place'; in the sense that place-making for particular groups always involves processes of exclusion as well as inclusion.

Figure 5.1: Mural commemorating the involvement of Polish airmen in the Battle of Britain



Source: Researcher's own photograph, Beverley Street, Shankill Road, September 2015

Along with projects which commemorate the contributions of Polish soldiers, there are also a number of historical commemorations held on occasions such as Polish Independence Day (on the 11th of November) and Constitution Day (on the 3rd of May). For Independence Day⁴², formal commemorations take place at Belfast City Hall and are attended by local politicians and community representatives. However, I also attended commemorations organised by a small, ad hoc group who focus specifically on commemorating Polish historical events, often at the site of the graves of Polish airmen in Milltown cemetery. Located in West Belfast, Milltown is known for hosting the graves of many prominent Irish republicans, but it is also the location of 7 graves of Polish airmen who were stationed in Northern Ireland during the Second World War.

These commemorations involve a short speech, a prayer and the laying of wreaths at the graveside (see Figure 5.2). The organiser, Piotr, invites people from the Polish community and also from ‘both sides’ of the local community. He explained that their main aim is to commemorate days of significance for Poles, rather than act as ‘an exercise in community relations’, but they can nonetheless provide a meeting point for people with opposing ideas and beliefs. This sentiment was also expressed in the speech that he gave at the graveside (first in Polish, then in English):

Our airmen interred here are laid to rest next to their comrades in arms of several other nationalities, who gave their lives in the common struggle against the Nazi German tyranny. Today, as many in the local society observe the Remembrance Day, we also pay tribute to them, as well as all from Ulster and the entire island of Ireland who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the two World Wars (Organiser’s speech, September 2015).

⁴² Polish Independence Day commemorates the founding of the Second Polish Republic in 1918. For 123 years prior to this, Poland was partitioned between Russia, Prussia and Austria and ceased to be a sovereign state.

As well as the graves of Polish soldiers who fought with the British army, there is a monument to Irish soldiers who died during the Second World War which is also located at Milltown. Although this is not part of the formal ceremony, the organiser lays a wreath at the monument in order to demonstrate respect for 'both sides' of the local community who fought and died in the wars (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.2: Grave of a Polish airman with a wreath for Independence Day



Source: Researcher's own photograph, Milltown Cemetery, Belfast, September 2015

Figure 5.3: Monument for Irish soldiers who died fighting for the British army in WW1 and WW2, with a wreath laid by Polish volunteers on Polish Independence Day



Source: Researcher's own photograph, Milltown Cemetery, Belfast, September 2015

The differences between the formal and less formal events highlight differing opinions on how better community relations can be achieved in practice. The organiser of these smaller, ad hoc events was scathing about many of the attempts to promote diversity and facilitate the integration of migrant communities:

I believe that if you have a project which is against racism and supporting diversity and you pack a hotel for a conference with all sorts of do-gooders to have a nice 3 course meal and a few drinks and you know, all wear suits and speak about the need to appreciate cultural diversity and immigrants - that would change nothing.

Instead, he argued that bringing people of different backgrounds together at the event, and taking a group of (Catholic) Polish men for a drink in a loyalist bar afterwards, was a much more significant indicator of integration 'on the ground'. However, other participants argued that there was also a need for wider representations of cultural diversity in Northern Ireland and for creating a variety of spaces where people from different backgrounds could come together, although these should aim to avoid becoming exercises in purely 'preaching to the converted'.

This discussion has highlighted that participants' motivations to establish and participate in Polish organisations were often driven by their desire to develop social relationships and a sense of belonging to place, as well to use their skills and knowledge to help other people. However, they can also be analysed as a vehicle through which the politics of belonging are negotiated. This refers to the relationship between Poles and others in Northern Ireland, and how their activities aim to build relationships with other groups and stake out a claim to belonging for Poles alongside other communities. However, as illustrated above, Polish community groups often have different ideas regarding how these aims should be achieved, which will be discussed further in the section to follow.

Polish organisations as a 'political' force?

The organisations featured in this chapter mainly framed their activities as having a cultural or educational (rather than a distinctly political) purpose (see also Juul, 2011; 2014; Boccagni, 2011). However, as the chapter has argued, some of their activities could be interpreted as being political in focus, in that they aim to challenge stereotypes and stake out claims to belonging in the receiving society. Nevertheless, there was a lesser degree of activity regarding attempts to influence government policy, either at home or abroad.

The majority of Polish organisations did not see themselves as having political goals. While carrying out the fieldwork, it became clear that they did not speak with one voice on political issues, or on the issues facing Polish migrants living abroad. This is partly due to the fact that, as highlighted in Chapter 2, migrants are not a homogeneous group and many aspects of people's identities (such as class, age and upbringing) become salient in different ways and at different times. These play a role in shaping their political attitudes and political engagement, rather than simply their shared nationality or ethnicity.

The diversity of viewpoints within the Polish 'community' was succinctly expressed by Piotr, and formed part of his justification for participating in the research:

I believe that the views of the Polish people in Northern Ireland on the subject of your research are too often expressed through the words of the usual suspects. Which would be the same people really, who wouldn't really necessarily represent the Polish people in Northern Ireland. I would believe that quite often, whatever they say is a reflection of their own agendas. Now, in saying that, I also believe that there's no way of determining who represents the Polish community in Northern Ireland because, well, how do you say? How do you basically say, none of them are elected, they might work as part of certain projects or whatnot but most of them certainly don't speak for me.

Previous research has highlighted that migrant organisations may wish to steer clear of party politics because they believe that cooperation with the state will be more difficult if they have firm political allegiances (see Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011:109). This view was expressed by a number of participants in my research, and has particular resonance in the case of Northern Ireland, where organisations did not wish to be seen to be ‘taking sides’ in the context of nationalist/unionist divisions. However, this would not automatically preclude them from lobbying government on issues which are of particular concern to Poles in Northern Ireland (such as hate crime or recognition of qualifications), which could be done on a cross-party basis.

Although not explicitly politically active, one of the organisations involved in my study was a member of NICEM (see Chapter 4), an umbrella organisation for ethnic minority community groups in Northern Ireland. Their coordinator explained that although they did not engage in political lobbying independently, as they did not have the capacity and they did not view it as their primary role, they had been involved in some activities through NICEM, such as submitting a consultation response to the Racial Equality Strategy. A Polish forum, chaired by the Polish consulate in Edinburgh (which is also responsible for supporting Polish citizens in Northern Ireland) has been set up to encourage cooperation, but this has focused primarily on educational and cultural matters rather than on political issues. For example, the UK government’s plans to restrict EU migrants’ access to benefits were discussed by the group. Although there were some proposals to produce a group statement on this matter, they could not come to an agreement and the proposal was not taken forward.⁴³

⁴³ It should be noted that when this topic arose during interviews, a number of interviewees were in favour of restricting EU migrants’ access to benefits. For further consideration of Polish migrants’ conceptualisations of welfare-deservingness, see Osopovic (2015). The majority of her participants believed that social security should

Regarding their continuing participation in Polish politics, a few representatives from Polish organisations had contact with Polish politicians after moving abroad. For example, after working with the Polish community through setting up a voluntary organisation, Damian acted as an advisor to a cross-party group of MPs in the Polish Parliament. He held a Master's degree in political science and had family members who were involved in politics, meaning that he had some connections with politicians before leaving Poland. On the other hand, Bartek had always had a keen interest in Polish politics, but working long hours as a lorry driver meant he had no time or energy for political engagement. While doing the same job in Northern Ireland, more stable hours and better pay meant that he could engage in these activities on a voluntary basis whilst also being able to provide for his family. Consequently, he began to liaise with Polish politicians in a way that he had not done previously, through organising visits of Polish MPs to Belfast (through his involvement in a Polish community organisation) and travelling to attend conferences in the Polish parliament).

Bartek's organisation was the only one involved in the research which viewed itself as having a distinctly political focus. They engaged with local politicians in Northern Ireland as well as being involved in homeland politics. They saw no conflict between engaging with politicians in Northern Ireland around issues of concern to their members whilst simultaneously lobbying Polish politicians to pay closer attention to the concerns of the diaspora. In an example of 'balancing' their engagement between the two polities, they hosted a meeting in Belfast with a Polish MP and 2 MLAs from the Northern Ireland Assembly to discuss issues facing the Polish community and to share ideas. They viewed these activities as an ongoing process of making sure their interests were represented both 'at home' in Poland

be awarded on a conditional basis (i.e. payment of taxes and law-abidance), rather than based purely on need.

and 'at home' in Northern Ireland, signalling their commitment to both places simultaneously. They were also active in encouraging Poles in Northern Ireland to vote in the 2015 Polish Presidential elections, through arranging a meeting in Belfast with one of the candidates (see Chapter 6 for more details).

Although they were not formally planning to put forward candidates for elections in Northern Ireland, one of their representatives highlighted the potential for the organisation to act as a springboard for this type of activity in the future. This demonstrates the connection which has often been observed between migrants' participation in civil society and engagement with formal politics (McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2015:388). Adam (another volunteer for the organisation) felt that Poles tended to be distrustful of politicians, a sentiment which was echoed by other interviewees. Therefore, he believed it was important for the organisation to show that they could have a practical impact on people's lives before any of their members ran for political office. This demonstrates the potential for such organisations to become a vehicle for facilitating more migrants to enter politics in Northern Ireland, even if their activities are currently in their relative infancy:

That's our aim, maybe one day someone from us will stand for election because we strongly feel that we are one of the biggest foreign communities in this place now but we need someone in the local council or even in Stormont, so let our voices be heard, you know. Now nobody cares about us because we don't have any representation here, so we think that one day, maybe in 5 years' time or 6 years' time, someone from us will stand for election and maybe he will win.

Conclusions

This chapter explored Polish migrants' participation in civil society, including the established organisations of the receiving society and the Polish diaspora organisations which have developed since 2004.

Emphasising that migrants' lives stretch beyond the boundaries of the receiving state, it also considered the ways and the extent to which migrants may participate in civil society across borders, both through their individual activities and the activities of diaspora organisations.

The chapter emphasised the importance of understanding the social and political context in migrants' home countries and how this may play a role in shaping their civic participation in the host country.

Furthermore, it emphasised the importance of the role of place in shaping opportunities and motivations for civic participation in the receiving society. As well as demonstrating how a sense of belonging and attachments at different scales both motivate and are produced by civic engagement, it also drew attention to how the specific context of Northern Ireland may influence migrants' civic participation.

Continuing to emphasise the importance of place, the chapter illustrated the idea of the 'place-based contract' as a means of conceptualising how migrants construct belonging to civic and political communities and how this shapes their civic engagement. It demonstrated that civic participation is facilitated by a sense of belonging to place which has both personal and social dimensions and contains both practical and emotional elements. The stories of the migrants outlined in this chapter show how rationales for participation in both home and host country contexts are shaped through subjective relationships with place and migrants' own understandings of what it means to belong to a particular political communities. The chapter also illustrated how migrants' attachments to place may operate at the local level or the 'micro-scale', rather than at the level of the nation-state. This underlines the need to 'rescale the polity' in order to more fully consider how such attachments may influence their civic participation.

Chapter Six: Exploring Polish migrants' voting practices from a transnational perspective

Geographers have long been interested in engaging with debates about electoral politics and practices; recognising that place provides a helpful lens through which to analyse the shaping of political identities and interests (Agnew, 1987; Johnson and Pattie, 2008; Pattie and Johnson, 2013). As devolution produces new sub-state levels at which political control is situated, and the development of supranational organisations (such as the EU) shifts democratic decision-making beyond the state, geographers' attention to spatiality and scale provides useful tools with which to analyse these developments (Desforges et al. 2005; Painter, 2002). Studies of migration have also highlighted the ways in which the increasing movement of people across borders produces new configurations of membership in political communities, and how analysing the relationships between states and non-resident citizens offers 'insights into the ways that state authority is being respatialised' (Collyer, 2014:56).

The previous chapter outlined the ways in which migrants' sense of belonging at different scales and over time can influence their civic engagement. It highlighted the role of place in shaping their participation and illustrated how the 'place-based contract' helps to conceptualise the ways in which migrants construct belonging to civic and political communities and develop their own understandings of their rights and duties. It also highlighted the importance of 'rescaling the polity' to view the political community as situated at multiple scales, particularly in order to emphasise the role of local relationships and attachments in shaping migrants' civic participation. This chapter develops these arguments further by considering migrants' involvement in formal politics, focusing on their voting practices.

The chapter begins by outlining some of the key debates regarding migrants' electoral participation and positions the current research in

relation to these. Continuing to explore migrants' lives and experiences as stretching across state boundaries, and considering the influence of their past experiences on their more recent political practices, it examines participants' attitudes and behaviour towards voting in elections when they lived in Poland. Subsequently, it explores the extent to which migrants continue to participate in Polish elections from abroad and their motivations for doing so. After considering the dynamics of external voting, it goes on to consider participants' attitudes and practices regarding voting in elections in Northern Ireland, outlining the barriers to electoral participation as well as the factors which facilitate migrants' engagement. In discussing these empirical findings, the chapter highlights the importance of place and local attachments in political processes, as well as recognising how identities and belonging at multiple scales shape political engagement.

Analysing migrants' voting behaviour: existing research

The study of electoral behaviour has long been a major concern of political scientists who have analysed the factors which facilitate or constrain an individual's participation in elections and shape their political preferences. Rational choice theory has been a strong influence on these studies, positing that individuals will vote only when they perceive the personal benefits to be greater than the costs (Downs, 1957; Elster, 1989; Scuzzarello, 2015a:1217; Wang, 2013:483). However, this approach has been critiqued on the grounds that it fails to pay attention to the wider social context (Pattie and Johnston, 2013:179), and the ways in which collective identities (rather than individual interests) may shape political behaviour (Scuzzarello, 2015a). Research has also questioned the degree to which political behaviour is the outcome of rational, cost-benefit calculations, with studies also highlighting the role of emotions in political decision-making (Boccagni, 2011; Schurr, 2013; Wang, 2013:484).

In relation to the voting patterns of migrants, a considerable body of research has focused on the ways in which immigrants become incorporated into the political life of the host country (Ebert and Okamoto, 2013; Fennema and Tillie, 1999; Koopmans, 2004; Jacobs et al. 2004; Tillie, 2004). In many countries, non-citizen residents are granted most of the social and economic rights enjoyed by full citizens, but few countries allow non-citizen residents to vote in national elections (Collyer, 2014:58). Although they have the right to vote in local elections, non-national EU citizens cannot vote in national elections outside their country of origin. It has been argued that the denial of voting rights puts these individuals in a state of limbo, where they are understood as belonging and contributing to a polity but are excluded from playing a part in the decision-making which shapes it (Kostakopoulou, 2012:27). An opposing view claims that the right to vote in national elections should remain with the country of origin rather than being transferred to the country of residence. If an EU citizen wishes to acquire full voting rights in host country, they should apply for citizenship after five years of residence (Baubock, 2012:3).

As well as studies of migrants' rights and voting behaviour in the receiving society, a growing body of work has aimed to shed light on migrants' continued participation in home country elections (e.g. Boccagni, 2011; Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011;2015). Although many countries have extended voting rights in national elections to non-resident citizens (Collyer, 2014:62) this topic has conventionally received little research attention (Lafleur, 2015:840). External voting should be set in the context of a broader set of continuing ties between the state and the diaspora, which has been referred to as 'extra-territorial citizenship' (Collyer, 2014; Collyer and Vathi, 2007; Fitzgerald 2006). This involves the extension of rights to non-resident citizens, as states increasingly recognise the value of retaining ties with the diaspora for potential political, cultural and economic gain (Boccagni, 2011:78; Collyer, 2014:55; McIlwaine and

Bermudez, 2015:387). Although external voters rarely have a significant impact on the outcome of elections (Boccagni, 2011:78), the extension of political enfranchisement is often of considerable symbolic significance (Lesińska, 2014:134). The ways in which political parties address the issue of emigration and the needs of emigrants is not just about reaching out to this constituency abroad, but it is also about attracting support from their families in the home country (ibid).

Although the extension of political rights to non-resident citizens is often controversial (Collyer and Vathi, 2007:4) it does not usually have the potential to significantly impact on election results, as voter turnout tends to be low (Boccagni, 2011:80; Lesińska, 2014:122). Research has attempted to identify the reasons behind this, such as the impact of heavily bureaucratic registration and voting requirements, levels of interest in politics and the impact of the activities of migrant associations on voter turnout (Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011;2015). However, a focus on the theoretical dimensions of external voting and the role of the state in extending rights to non-citizens has been prioritised over studies which focus on the perspectives of migrants themselves (Boccagni, 2011:79). Furthermore, existing studies of migrants' transnational voting practices have predominantly focused on the attitudes and motivations of those who *do* vote in home country elections (e.g. Boccagni, 2011; Lafleur and Sanchez-Dominguez, 2014) rather than also considering the attitudes and characteristics of non-voters (see McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2015). As a result, further research is required to grasp the complexities of migrants' engagements with external voting (Collyer, 2014:69) and how these may vary according to different home and host country contexts.

Drawing on original qualitative and quantitative data, this chapter aims to contribute to the growing body of empirical work on migrants' transnational voting practices by avoiding the tendency to 'sample on the dependent variable' (Guarnizo, 2003:1213; Portes, 2003:876) and

exploring the attitudes and experiences of migrants who do not vote. As such, it contributes to the extant body of work which aims to explore the dynamics behind 'who votes and who doesn't' (McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2015:386). By focusing on Polish migrants in the European context, it also contributes to the larger body of case studies on the use of the external vote, which to date has largely been focused on the transnational political practices of Latin American migrants in the US and the UK (e.g. Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011:1500).

Conceptually, the chapter aims to delineate the notion of the 'place-based contract' by illustrating how a sense of belonging to place in its multiple dimensions may enrich our understanding of how migrants construct belonging to multiple political communities and how this affects their decisions about electoral participation in different jurisdictions. This aims to clarify and extend Baubock's idea of 'stakeholder citizenship' by recognising that emotional attachments and feelings of belonging are often an important driver of political participation, along with purely practical considerations about the potential future benefits to be derived from such activity. The chapter argues that although Polish migrants have the right to electoral participation in both home and host country elections (regardless of their future plans), their own understandings of what it means to be a citizen and their personal 'place-based contracts' also have an important role to play in their decisions about voting.

As well as helping to analyse participation in home country elections, I argue that being more attentive to these different dimensions of belonging to place can also help us to understand the dynamics of political decision-making in the host country. By recognising the role of emotional attachments, the chapter also contributes to work in both political science and human geography which calls for closer attention to the emotional dimensions of citizenship and political engagement (e.g. Boccagni, 2011; Ho, 2009; Schurr, 2013).

Experiences of electoral participation while living in Poland

Voting can be considered to be a 'habit-forming' activity (Waldinger et al. 2012) and research has demonstrated that family, peer group and social context can have a significant influence on shaping voting behaviour (Pattie and Johnson, 2013). Consequently, it is important to consider how migrants' attitudes towards voting are shaped prior to migration, not just once they are living outside their country of origin.

It emerged that the majority of interviewees (37 out of 41) had voted in at least one Polish election before leaving the country⁴⁴. Although the majority of participants had some prior experience of voting in Poland, their commitment to participation in elections varied in terms of its intensity. While some participants were strongly committed to voting in all elections on principle, others were much less so. In several cases, participants had voted when they were younger due to pressure from their parents but stopped when they became more independent from their families. A few voted if it was convenient for them or if a particular candidate had piqued their interest, but they did not make the effort to turn out for every election.

For example, Roman was a 41-year-old IT consultant who had been living in Belfast since 2004. He had never supported a particular political party in Poland and tended to vote for the party which he disliked the least. In his late teens and early 20s, voting also provided an opportunity to rebel against his family and their pro-church views, through voting for the party that they opposed:

⁴⁴ Among the remaining four participants, one had left Poland before the age of 18 and two had left shortly after their 18th birthdays, meaning they did not have the opportunity to vote in an election. The one remaining participant explained that she was not interested in politics and had never voted in a national or local election, although she did vote in the referendum on Poland's accession to the European Union.

Interviewer (I): Did you vote in elections when you were living in Poland?

R: Eh yes, but usually against rather than for. So if I disliked some party then I voted for anybody but not this party.

I: And did you always turn out to vote, every time there was an election?

R: When it was convenient to me, it wasn't like oh there is an election and I'm going to go and drop everything I'm doing, it was more like, I've got nothing to do, let's go...

Like Roman, Aneta did not support a particular political party or candidate, but she viewed voting as one of the core duties of citizenship. She came to Northern Ireland in 2006 at the age of 19 and now works as an interpreter. She had one opportunity to vote in Polish elections before leaving the country and felt that it was her duty to use it. However, as she did not want to choose any of the candidates, she decided to spoil her ballot.

I always wanted to be a solicitor back in Poland and so I was always into law. I always knew that voting is your obligation so you have to go voting, because if you don't vote then you don't have a voice. Back then, I had the opinion that there was nobody interesting to vote for, so going and wasting your vote would be the most appropriate thing to do. So I actually, on that election, went and marked two candidates randomly because it spoils the ballot, so that was my first voting.

Although Aneta had been interested in politics as a teenager, and began voting as soon as she reached the age of 18, other participants explained that they had become more interested in politics as they had grown older. Danuta, a 41-year-old woman living in Belfast, became more interested in politics and started voting in Polish elections in her mid-20s.

I think that it is a kind of a citizen's duty, I realised when I was 25 that you should do things in your life in a productive way, so then I thought it was a very important part. I was not maybe happy with several programmes or people and so on but I was trying to study and to be kind of really... to make informed choices.

Although Danuta was in the habit of voting by the time she left Poland in her early 30s, several participants had been more engaged in politics when they were teenagers than they were at the time of the interview. This may be due to coming of age during the fall of the communist regime, as they had initially felt optimistic about the opportunity to vote in democratic elections. They felt that they had previously been more 'naïve' and believed that politics could really make a difference, but were increasingly disillusioned with the ability of politicians to deliver real change (see also Driver and Garapich, 2012b:4).

Participation in Polish elections since moving abroad

My survey found that around a third (34%) of participants had voted in Polish elections on a regular basis since moving to Northern Ireland. A further 16% voted in Polish elections on an occasional basis and 9% had voted only at the beginning of their time in Northern Ireland (but had since stopped). Regarding participation in the most recent Polish Presidential election (May 2015), 29% of survey respondents had voted in the first round and 24% in the second round. Almost a quarter (24%) of survey respondents voted in the parliamentary elections in October 2015.

Regarding participation in home country elections, previous research found a correlation between levels of voter turnout and levels of education, in that the best educated people are the most likely to vote (McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2015:388; Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011:111). My survey had a low response rate from those with a 'basic' level of education (only 3 respondents) and the vast majority of the sample had at least an intermediate level of education (A levels). The results showed that 57% of those with a PhD level education had voted; compared to 33% of those with a Masters and 37% of those with an intermediate level of education.

Table 6.1: Cross-tabulation of level of education and frequency of voting in Polish elections since moving abroad

Level of education	Always voted	Sometimes voted	Only at the beginning of my stay	Never	Totals
Basic	0	0	1 (33%)	2 (66%)	3
Intermediate	25 (37%)	10 (15%)	2 (3%)	30 (45%)	67
Degree	12 (28%)	7 (16%)	8 (19%)	16 (37%)	43
Masters	20 (33%)	11 (18%)	3 (5%)	26 (43%)	61
PhD	4 (57%)	0	2 (29%)	1 (14%)	7
Totals	61	28	16	73	181

Source: Author's survey (n = 181)

Research has also highlighted the relevance of the length of residence away from the home country and the impact which this may have on voting behaviour. This hypothesis posits that migrants are less likely to vote the longer that they are away (Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011:119). However, there were relatively similar levels of voter turnout among survey respondents who had been in Northern Ireland for 1 – 2 years and those who had been living there for 11 + years (29% and 27% respectively) (see Table 6.2). The highest levels of turnout were among those who had lived in Northern Ireland for 3 – 4 years and 7 – 8 years (32% in both cases). Therefore, the survey results do not show a clear decline in voter turnout with the length of time living abroad.

Table 6.2: Cross-tabulation of length of residence and voter turnout in the first round of the 2015 Polish Presidential elections

Length of residence	Voted	Didn't vote	No answer	Totals
1 – 2 years	8 (29%)	19 (68%)	1 (4%)	28
3 – 4 years	7 (32%)	14 (64%)	1 (5%)	22
5 – 6 years	5 (24%)	16 (76%)		21
7 – 8 years	10 (32%)	21 (68%)		31
9 – 10 years	14 (26%)	38 (72%)	1 (2%)	53
11 years +	7 (27%)	19 (73%)		26
No answer		1		1
Totals	51 (28%)	128 (72%)	3	182

Source: Author's survey (n = 182)

It is often stated that a lack of interest in politics is one of the main factors explaining migrants' decisions not to continue voting in home country elections (Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011:100). However, as outlined in Table 6.3, only a minority of survey respondents cited a lack of interest in politics as a reason for not participating in Polish elections.

Table 6.3: Reasons for voting or not voting in Polish elections⁴⁵

Reasons (why not):	Number and percentage
Not interested in politics/Polish politics	16 (17%)
No party which I could support/couldn't decide who to vote for	16 (17%)
'Other'	12 (13%)
Lack of time/had to be at work on the day	11 (12%)
Polling station too far away/couldn't get there	8 (9%)
Not registered on time/inconvenient registration process	7 (8%)
Waste of time/no point voting	5 (6%)
People living in Poland should choose – I don't live there	5 (6%)
Illness	3 (3%)
Lack of information about where to vote	3 (3%)
I was on holiday at the time	3 (3%)
Laziness	2 (2)
Reasons (why):	Number and percentage
I wanted to increase my participation in Polish political life	1 (1%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 92)

Regarding their interest in Polish politics since moving abroad, survey respondents reported relatively high levels of engagement with various forms of media. The majority followed Polish political commentary either daily (50%) or a few times a week (32%) (see Table 6.4). A lower (but still significant) proportion discussed Polish politics with friends

⁴⁵ This was asked as an open question and answers were manually coded. This followed a question which established whether participants had voted in Polish elections or not (see Appendix D for full list of survey questions).

and family daily (17%) or a few times a week (37%) (see Table 6.5), despite relatively low levels of voter turnout in Polish elections (see also Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011:111).

Table 6.4: Frequency of following Polish political commentary in newspapers/on TV/on social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.)

Level of frequency	Number/percentage of participants
Daily	89 (50%)
A few times a week	58 (32%)
A few times a month	13 (7%)
Rarely	18 (10%)
Never	4 (2%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 182)

Table 6.5: Frequency of discussing Polish politics with family or friends⁴⁶

Level of frequency	Number/percentage of participants
Daily	30 (17%)
A few times a week	67 (37%)
A few times a month	43 (24%)
Rarely	39 (21%)
Never	3 (2%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 182)

⁴⁶ The question didn't distinguish whether this was friends and family at home or abroad.

One argument against allowing non-resident citizens to vote in national elections is that, due to their non-resident status, 'they cannot be fully aware of its political situation and therefore their choices are often random' (Lesińska, 2014:123). Baubock (2007:2408) has stated that while those who live permanently in the country are likely to be 'well-informed about the candidates and issues' this cannot be assumed to be the case for those who reside outside the territory, who may 'vote irresponsibly'. Empirically, this can be viewed as a weak argument, given the proliferation of communication technologies and mass media which enable emigrants to access this information at the click of a button (Lesińska, 2014:123). Indeed, in my research, few participants claimed that a lack of information about Polish politics was the key factor preventing them from voting.

Over the last two decades, access to the internet has become more widespread and communication technologies have become more sophisticated. The rise of social media has also had a significant influence on the spread and consumption of political news. While the use of the internet to keep up with political developments was less common when they had lived in Poland, participants frequently used websites and internet forums to keep abreast of Polish political commentary while living in Northern Ireland. Technological developments, such as Skype and low-cost phone-calls through services such as WhatsApp, enabled migrants to keep in touch frequently with family and friends back home (see Metykova, 2010). Low-cost airlines also enabled more frequent trips back home, as Martyna outlined:

My mum tells me what is happening. I read it on the internet. And when I go to Poland, because I go to Poland often, then I see what is happening. Two weeks in Poland is enough for me to get it, to understand it, more or less. I read about it in order to know, in order to be able to speak to my parents about it, in order to be able to discuss it with the people I meet in Poland. I have a lot of friends in Poland and we sit sometimes over coffee, tea and talk about politics, because politics is our favourite subject in Poland.

As some Poles have established social networks with co-nationals, discussions about Polish politics may also take place among acquaintances in Northern Ireland. Damian explained that it was fairly common to discuss Polish politics during social occasions:

Politics is just one of our topics to discuss when we meet, and it was quite funny because we, whenever I go and have a meeting with international friends, and there is a person from Poland among the group, we usually start speaking Polish and when we speak Polish then people know that possibly there is a 90% chance that we will discuss politics. It's like it's, you know, it's a way to... it's like our small talk.

Polish TV was also a common way of keeping abreast of current events in Poland, as a significant number of participants had Polish satellite TV installed in their homes. However, some of the younger participants in the research tended not to watch TV and accessed news solely through their laptops. Participants often expressed a lack of trust in mainstream media and perceived it as often biased. For example, Jakub argued that the internet provided a more reliable source of information about Polish politics than newspapers or TV:

In my opinion the internet is the best source of information, because you can find things yourself which interest you and decide for yourself if they are true. Unfortunately the mainstream media everywhere, no matter which country, presents only one version of events, the version that they want, the correct version, the politically correct version as it's called.

Given the relatively high levels of interest in politics displayed by the research participants, we should consider other explanations behind the relatively low turnout in Polish elections from abroad, as other studies have also highlighted the need to interrogate the gap between voter turnout and interest in politics (McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2015:396, see also Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011). My findings highlighted the impact of mistrust of politicians and disappointment with politics as significant factors discouraging voter turnout from abroad (see also Boccagni, 2011:92; Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2015). As Damian explained, the

relatively low level of participation in Polish elections among emigrants can be partly explained in reference to the reasons why many Poles decided to leave the country:

To answer this question we have to focus on why people decided to go abroad, why did they decide to migrate from Poland? Most people would say that they decided to migrate because they didn't like what was happening in Poland in terms of economy and in terms of politics. I think politics is something which is crucial here, because most of them decided to go abroad and basically just escape from what was happening back home.

In keeping with these comments, other interviewees expressed disappointment with politicians who had failed to deliver promised improvements in their standard of living. Several interviewees highlighted the parliamentary elections of 2007 as a turning point for their continuing engagement with Polish politics, explaining that they had been optimistic at the prospect of a relatively new party, Civic Platform (PO) being able to achieve change. They were critical of what they perceived as the overly socially conservative agenda of PIS and its close links to the Catholic Church. They had viewed PO as a more progressive option, and had been motivated to use their external vote in the hope that the party could create favourable conditions for them to return to the country. However, there was a widespread sense that PO has failed to deliver, which has contributed to interviewees' largely negative view of Polish politicians as 'liars', 'thieves', 'cheats', 'ignorant', 'uneducated' and 'only out for themselves'.

Although disillusionment and disappointment with politicians was a key factor influencing participation in electoral politics, there are clearly other factors at work. As highlighted in Table 6.3, participants often felt that the process of voting in elections from abroad was much less convenient than voting while in Poland. Alina, who had been living in Belfast for 6 months at the time of the interview, planned to stay with her fiancé for several years in order to work and save money before returning to Poland to raise a family there. She expressed a strong sense

of identification with Poland and explained that she had always voted in Polish elections back home because '*people should take responsibility for all matters which are connected with the country*'. However, she did not plan to vote in the upcoming Presidential elections:

I: The next Polish elections, there will be some elections next year. Do you plan to vote in those?

A: Probably I will be here during the election and that is why I will not take part in it.

I: You can usually vote here though, there's usually a polling station.

A: Yes I know but, you know, there's going and looking for papers and making all this paperwork for the election. People would rather resign from elections than go and do all this stuff in order to give one vote.

Alina's views were echoed by several other interviewees who had voted in Poland but had ceased electoral participation in Polish elections since moving abroad. Although Alina lived fairly close to where the polling station in Belfast was located, and viewed the registration paperwork the main barrier, others viewed their distance from the polling station as the main disincentive (see also Boccagni, 2011:83; and McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2015:395). As in other parts of the UK, many Poles are living in rural locations (Stenning and Dawley, 2009; Russell, 2012:14) while there tends to be only one polling station (located in Belfast) during Polish elections. In addition, Polish elections always take place on a Sunday and some interviewees had jobs which involved weekend shifts, such as working in a restaurant or in a postal sorting office. This acted as a barrier to their participation, as they were not willing or able to miss out on a day's wages in order to vote (see also Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011:107; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011:395).

Previous research has highlighted that bureaucracy in registration and voting practices can often have an impact on migrants' attitudes towards voting in home country elections (Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011:107; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2015:394). For example,

when the vote was extended to Mexicans living abroad, the requirement to download, print and post a hard copy of the registration form presented considerable barriers, particularly for more marginalised and less educated migrants. In addition, the complexity of the form-filling resulted in a lot of applications being declared invalid (Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011:108).

It has also been suggested that states may intentionally create bureaucratic barriers in order to ensure low turnout, which acts as a constraint on the influence of emigrants' votes (Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011:103, see also McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2015:394). However, a number of procedural adjustments have been made which aim to make it easier for Poles to vote from abroad. These include the introduction of an online registration system, an increased number of overseas polling stations and the option to vote via post (since 2011) (Lesińska, 2014:133). As polling stations tend to be concentrated in large cities this aims to offer greater convenience for potential voters living outside of large urban areas. However, postal voting has not proven to be a popular option (ibid. 125). This raises the question of whether the postal voting option has been well publicised among Poles abroad. It was not generally seen as a viable or a convenient choice among my participants, despite having the potential to overcome many of the barriers which are outlined above. Several interviewees' accounts also conveyed a sense of apathy or inertia when it came to the process of voting from abroad, which appeared to extend beyond the mere physical inconvenience of going to cast a vote.

Natalia had lived in Belfast for 8 years at the time of the interview and worked as a supervisor in a café. She has two children with her husband whom she met at work and who is from outside the EU. Although they planned to stay in Belfast over the longer-term, she explained that she has become more interested in Polish politics since she moved abroad, and she keeps up with the latest developments by having Polish current affairs magazines delivered to her home. However, she has not voted in

a Polish election during that time period, despite having a group of Polish friends who are regular voters:

No, I have a friend who always pushes me to register and vote but every year there is something that I don't, or it's too late to register now, you know, or I am at work and I forgot, or it was Sunday so I was 12 hours at work so I didn't have a chance. So no, it didn't happen yet.

Regarding the upcoming Polish Presidential elections in 2015, Natalia spoke animatedly about the need to vote for anyone other than the candidate from PiS. However, she acknowledged that she had similar feelings before the previous elections but did not manage to vote.

I: Do you think that you will vote in the Presidential elections next year?

N: Oh definitely.

I: So you think you are going to vote?

N: I think so, I think I have to vote this year, for the upcoming elections, but we will see. Well I really think that I have to but I don't think it's going to happen, because I felt the same way last year [laughs], not last year but two years ago, was it, the last Presidential election whenever that happened, I'm lost in time. Well, a good few years ago.

Although Natalia outlined a number of practical barriers to voting (such as a long shift at work) she also displayed contradictory attitudes and feelings towards voting which are not easily explained. One possible explanation is that for some migrants, physical distance from the home country creates emotional distance which lessens the pull towards political participation (even if they feel that they should vote on principle). Another possible explanation is that although many migrants still feel attached to their home country and interested in political life there, they are only prepared to spend a limited amount of time and effort on procedures related to voting. For example, a 1998 survey cited by Lafleur and Calderon Chelius (2011) found that migrants were prepared to spend up to one hour on activities related to using their external vote (i.e. going to vote/registering to vote) whereas they were 'willing to spend more time on administrative procedures which have

an impact on their daily life in the host country' (Lafleur and Calderon Chelius, 2011:11).

Developing the 'place-based contract': emotional and pragmatic aspects

In developing his concept of stakeholdership, Baubock (2007:2422) emphasises that in order to justify external voting on normative grounds, the right to vote should be limited to 'individuals whose circumstances of life link their future well-being to the flourishing of a particular polity' (ibid.). Although such conditions do not apply to migrants' voting rights in practice (as they tend to be granted on the basis of legal citizenship rather than an individual's future plans), I argue that different conceptions of belonging to political communities are prevalent in migrants' narratives regarding their decisions to vote in home country elections. As noted above (see Table 6.2), the length of time spent living in Northern Ireland did not seem to have a significant impact on my participants' attitudes towards voting in home country elections. However, based on Baubock's stakeholder principle, we could hypothesise that migrants' future plans play some role in their continued engagement with electoral politics in the home country. As outlined in Table 6.6, nearly half of survey respondents planned to stay in Northern Ireland permanently, with just over 10% claiming that they would stay more than 10 years, and more than a quarter saying that they did not know how long they would stay.

Table 6.6: Intentions regarding length of stay in Northern Ireland

Length of intended stay⁴⁷	Number/percentage of respondents
Less than 2 years	7 (3.9%)
2 – 5 years	9 (5%)
5 – 10 years	9 (5%)
10+ years	19 (10.6%)
Permanently	87 (48.6%)
I don't know	48 (26.8%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 179)

In the 2015 Polish Presidential elections, voter turnout was highest among those who said that they planned to stay in Northern Ireland for more than 10 years (37%), followed by those who said they didn't know how long they would stay (27%). A fifth of those who said that they planned to stay permanently also voted in this election (see Table 6.7).

⁴⁷ This question asked about their length of intended stay from the date of taking the survey.

Table 6.7: Cross-tabulation of length of intended stay in Northern Ireland and voting behaviour in the first round of the 2015 Polish Presidential election

Length of time they intend to stay	Voted	Didn't vote	Not sure	No answer	Totals
Less than 2 years	2 (29%)	5 (71%)	0	0	7 (4%)
2 – 5 years	1 (11%)	7 (78%)	1 (11%)	0	9 (5%)
5 – 10 years	2 (22%)	7 (78%)	0	0	9 (5%)
10+ years	7 (37%)	12 (63%)	0	0	19 (11%)
Permanently	17 (20%)	64 (74%)	5 (6%)	1 (1%)	87 (49%)
Don't know	13 (27%)	33 (69%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	48 (27%)
Totals	42	128	7	2	179

Author's survey: (n = 179)

Although these results are exploratory rather than conclusive, they mark a starting point for investigating the complexity behind migrants' voting rationales. We can see that there is not a clear relationship between planning to return to Poland and continuing to vote in home country elections, as 20% of survey respondents who planned to stay in Northern Ireland permanently also voted in the most recent Polish elections. The discussion to follow highlights that although migrants' voting intentions are shaped, in part, by their future plans (which may shift over time) it is more helpful to understand their rationales for electoral participation in terms of a dynamic and personal 'place-based contract' which has both emotional and practical elements.

Explaining why she hadn't continued voting in Polish elections since leaving the country, Ania a 29-year-old interpreter who had been living in Belfast for 3 years, said that she saw her future in the UK and she did not think it was right for her to participate in decision-making in a place where she did not intend to live. This form of moral reasoning was also present in other participants' decisions not to continue voting. Although Ania was relatively well-informed about Polish politics and had voted in Polish elections while living there, she did not wish to participate in making decisions on behalf of a political community which she no longer felt a part of, and whose decision-making processes she would no longer be affected by:

Because for now I don't intend to return to Poland, and it seems to me, I don't feel like I have that right to have a say in what happens in Poland. I think that everyone abroad who goes abroad has a kind of split personality, maybe it's a problem with identification, but it seems to me that currently I'm more interested if some topic affects me here and not in Poland. I don't live there, and I don't think that I should express my opinion on the topic.

At the time of the interview, Ania had made a firm decision that she saw her future in the UK rather than Poland, and planned to move to England with her partner soon after the interview. However, other participants were still in limbo regarding their future plans, which also had an impact on their voting behaviour. Emilia, an architect, had been living in Newry for 9 years. She had only intended to move abroad for a year after her studies in order to gain some work experience, but for a combination of personal and professional reasons she had stayed for longer than she had originally intended. Although she often thought about returning to Poland, the lack of a firm decision on the matter meant she did not feel comfortable participating in Polish elections:

I live here but I might be coming back to Poland next year or in a couple of years or whatever, and I don't live in Poland at the moment either, so it is hard for me to have an impact on the political situation when I am not there and when I am not really fully participating here either, so for this reason I don't think I should vote. Definitely not in Poland, because I know numbers count,

but at the same time people living here, they set up their own families here and they set up their households here and they don't have a clue about the Polish situation at all, even though they watch Polish news, you know, you have to be there, you have to live there, you have to have an investment. You are here and then you vote, what's the point?

Emilia's comments highlight a tension between different ways of 'knowing' about politics which had an important influence on participants' decisions about voting from abroad. Although some participants were informed about party policies or felt that they could easily access that information if desired, knowing the content of party manifestos (from a technical or intellectual perspective) is not the same as being directly impacted by the results of these policies (in terms of having 'experiential' knowledge of their effects). From this point of view, it was not enough for Emilia to be informed about political developments if she would not be bound by their practical consequences and they would not impact on her daily life.

Although some participants declined to continue voting in Polish elections on what they perceived as moral grounds, others saw it as a moral duty to continue with their electoral participation, even if they had no immediate plans to return to the country. As also highlighted by Boccagni's (2011) work, my research found that participants were often motivated to continue voting out of a general sense of civic duty, rather than an affiliation with a particular political party (see also Chapter 7). Although Adam planned to stay in Northern Ireland for the medium to long-term, he still took an active interest in Polish politics and saw voting in Polish elections as an important duty required by his continuing Polish citizenship:

I'm not in Poland anymore, and I don't think I'm coming back, but my parents are there, my wife's parents are there, my brother is there, he's only coming onto the job market now, my wife's brother is there. And they are still there and I'd like to go back some time, even if it has to be for retirement. By the very fact that I came here and I will probably stay here, I'm not transferred from being Polish to Irish. If we are Polish citizens then we not only have the

privileges of it, we also have the duties. That's actually a famous citation from Roman Dmowski, the creator of the national democracy movement, 'I am Polish and I have Polish duties'. It's something that is maybe more into the sphere of feelings or feeling what is right, but there are also sharp economic factors why we should [continue to vote]. Maybe I will be able to set up a sort of enterprise, and maybe I can export something from Northern Ireland to Poland, but I want to have a proper partner in Poland and I want him to know, I want him to work in a good, stable economic environment so he can have a good business.

As Adam explains, his sense of having a continued membership in the political community is due to the practical benefits that he may one day derive from it, as he may eventually return to Poland or trade with Polish companies in the future. He also mentions his strong family ties to Poland, which persist even though he has no immediate plans to return. However, his account also demonstrates a sense of emotional commitment to place. His decision to vote is strongly linked to his feelings about what is right, regardless of the impact on him personally.

Ela, the youngest interviewee at 18 years old, had been living in Northern Ireland for 10 years and felt strongly about participating in both Polish and Northern Irish elections. She followed Polish politics through the media and planned to vote in the 2015 Polish elections for the first time. Although she felt at home in Northern Ireland, she identified strongly as Polish and retained close ties to the country, even considering going to work there once she had finished university:

Basically I don't know whether I'm going to move back to Poland, I may or may not, but it's still my country and I'm still a national of the country and my family lives there and I just think that I should still have a say in it. Because fair enough, if you change your nationality and you become completely British and you want to disassociate yourself from your fatherland, motherland, then fair enough, but I don't feel like that at all, you know. And I do spend time in Poland and I may go back to Poland, no one knows, it's basically, the biggest issue for me is that the Polish government isn't doing very much to help immigrants come back, like we don't have a reason to come back, jobs aren't created and we don't have a place to live, and I want them to start doing that so we can come back.

Although all of the participants featured in the preceding discussion viewed voting as a citizen's duty, they conceived of this in different ways. Adam and Ela displayed considerable emotional attachments and identifications with Poland (and ideas of 'Polishness') but they also focused on the possession of a passport (the legal dimension of citizenship) as an important justification for (and symbolic of their obligation to) continued participation in the country's political life. Although Emilia and Magda also maintained strong attachments to Poland (or in Emilia's case, to her home region of Kaszuby) they conceived of citizenship as being bound by collective decision-making and its consequences, rather than the material fact of having a passport or legal belonging to a particular nation-state. This highlights the distinction between perceptions of citizenship as a status (with corresponding rights and duties) and citizenship as a process (where one must actively engage as part of a community over time). My research demonstrates that these perspectives on citizenship are far from simply academic or theoretical constructions. To the contrary, they play an important role in shaping migrants' personal 'place-based contracts' and their moral narratives regarding participation in home country elections, which influences their political participation in different places over time.

The role of emotions in shifting voting intentions

In his research on the external voting practices of Ecuadorian migrants in Italy, Boccagni (2011) argues that voter turnout was predominantly shaped by 'patriotism, homesickness and the desire to reproduce their social milieu abroad' rather than primarily by a desire to influence politics in the homeland. Although a key motivator for participating in elections was a sense of 'civic duty' (ibid. p. 83) his ethnographic account of the election day illustrates how participating in homeland elections while living in the host country was a means of 'reproducing

“Ecuadorianness” overseas’ and as a way of ‘celebrating migrants’ attachments to the motherland’ (ibid. p. 89) rather than a focus on party politics. He describes the atmosphere at the polling station, with ‘thousands of voters gathered in long queues’ and an atmosphere ‘like that of a popular festival’ (ibid.).

Although a strong sense of attachment to Poland and sense of civic duty were key motivators for continuing participation in Polish elections, migrants’ feelings of duty and emotional attachments were expressed in a very different way, not least when it came to the atmosphere of the polling day itself. Aneta described voting in Polish elections as a ‘serious’ occasion, both at home and abroad. Furthermore, rather than the practice of voting producing a sense of closeness to the homeland, she explained that it engendered a feeling of distance or isolation:

I: When you voted in Polish elections in Northern Ireland, does it feel different from when you voted in Poland, that one time?

M: It is different, because you feel kind of isolated from Poland, but on the other hand, it looks kind of the same. There is this one big room and the elections are organised usually by Polish people, so they are still pretty serious, because they are kind of more concerned that somebody is going to say that it wasn’t a valid election or it wasn’t organised the right way, because you are abroad. So it is the same serious as it is in Poland.

As the Polish Presidential elections in 2015 took place during my fieldwork period, I attended the polling station in order to observe the dynamics of the situation. My fieldnotes reflect on the polling day as a rather subdued and quiet affair, offering a sharp contrast to Boccagni’s (2011) description of polling day as like a ‘popular festival’ and his participants’ motivations to be part of ‘an event’:

The polling station was in the Chinese Welfare Association and you wouldn’t really have known that there was anything special going on. There were just a couple of small signs with a Polish flag marking out that it was a polling station, and telling people where to go. There were certainly no queues (we were there at 11 am in the morning). I met Artur and we waited for his brother for about half an hour. While we were chatting there were some people

trickling in and out, some of them were pretty well-dressed and looked like they might be coming from church, but certainly not a lot of people (Fieldnotes, May 2015).

As in Boccagni's (2011) research, taking an ethnographic approach added to my understanding of the situation and voters' motivations. Although voters appeared to be motivated largely by a sense of civic duty, their attitude towards voting was one of resignation rather than celebration. This was captured in Adam's comment, when I asked him how he usually felt after voting in Polish elections:

It's a very weird feeling, but lots of people feel this even if they don't admit it. It's very negative and maybe something that I shouldn't really say out loud, but I think it's going to be lost, a lost vote or lost time.

My interactions with people at the polling station also allowed me to grasp the limitations of asking participants about their voting behaviour and voting intentions at a particular point in time, and how emotions and new developments could cause migrants' orientations to 'pivot' back towards engagement in homeland politics (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004:1011). As Levitt and Glick Schiller (ibid.) note, migrants' transnational engagements are often not linear and sequential but 'capable of rotating back and forth and changing direction'.

This point is well illustrated by an encounter with two interview participants whom I met by chance at the polling station. I interviewed Grzegorz and Edyta in the autumn of 2014⁴⁸ when they both explained that they were completely uninterested in Polish politics and had not voted since leaving the country around 10 years ago. For this reason, they were adamant that they would not vote in the upcoming

⁴⁸ I met Grzegorz on the website 'Gumtree' and we participated in a Polish-English language exchange for the duration of my fieldwork period (see Chapter 3). I became friends with him and his wife and we socialised together regularly, sometimes also with Edyta (whom he was friends with). This encounter at the polling station was all the more surprising as we had discussed his disillusionment with politics several times over this period.

Presidential elections in May 2015. However, it became clear that their attitudes had changed in the intervening months. Part of their motivation was the emergence of a candidate who had positioned himself as 'anti-establishment' and as separate from the political class which they distrusted, as I outline in my fieldwork notes below:

Surprisingly enough, Grzegorz turned up with Edyta. They were both voting for the first time in 10 years (since they had moved to Northern Ireland) and both of them told me previously that they were not interested in politics. I asked them why they had decided to vote in this election and Edyta said that this time it looked as though the person in third place in the polls (Paweł Kukiz) really had a chance. Grzegorz said he had been thinking about it and he was feeling concerned about what was happening in Poland. Despite telling me previously that politicians were 'a band of thieves' and he had no interest in politics at all, he had decided that he wanted to give Kukiz his support. I was really surprised to see him there (Fieldnotes, May 2015).

The candidate in question, Paweł Kukiz, was a Polish rock singer and actor who had recently entered politics. He was also the only candidate to visit Belfast and meet potential voters in the course of his election campaign. During his question and answer session with attendees, he expressed sympathy with the situation of emigrants and their motivations for leaving the country, saying that he would also 'put his own children in a suitcase' if the political situation did not change (Fieldnotes, April 2015). His popularity as an entertainer in Poland, coupled with his repeated assertion that he was 'antysystemowiec' (anti-establishment), made him popular among voters both at home and abroad. He secured 58% of first round votes at the polling station in Belfast⁴⁹ and gained over 32,000 votes from Poles in the UK as a whole, which amounted to 53% of the total votes cast by UK-based Polish citizens (*Panstwowa Komisja Wyborcza* - State Electoral Commission], 2015). In the end, he took third place in the election overall, an

⁴⁹ This was derived from figures posted on social media by one of the polling station organisers after the election. 1019 votes were cast in Belfast, amounting to approximately 1/20th of the Polish-born residents in Northern Ireland.

impressive result for a political newcomer.

This example highlights how new developments and shifting emotional landscapes can stir up previously dormant attachments to the homeland. Grzegorz's feeling of 'concern' about what was happening in Poland prompted him towards political action, despite the fact that he had not lived in Poland for 10 years and did not plan to return. Although both he and Edyta were adamant that they had lost faith in politicians and were completely disillusioned with politics, new developments in the political landscape had the capacity to produce feelings of hope again. Parallels can also be drawn with Schudson's (1998) concept of the 'monitorial citizen'. He argues that although people may not regularly be engaged in political activity, they often keep abreast of political affairs (to some extent) and still have the potential to act on particular issues which they feel strongly about. Grzegorz and Edyta's experiences demonstrate the strong pull of emotions in political decision-making, underlining the need to more fully consider the emotional aspects of migrants' lives in order to analyse their political participation in different places over time.

Voting in Northern Ireland: unpacking the influence of place & identity

As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, little is known about A8 migrants' attitudes towards voting in UK elections. Furthermore, little research has been carried out on the attitudes of migrants in Northern Ireland towards voting in local and NI Assembly elections. My survey found that 67% of respondents were on the electoral register in Northern Ireland, 26% were not and 7% did not know. This figure is slightly higher than the available official figure on voter registration among Polish citizens in Northern Ireland, which was approximately

60% in 2013.⁵⁰ However, the number of Poles registered is not an accurate indication of those who will turn out to vote. As previous research has highlighted (e.g. Driver and Garapich, 2012a:9), a number of interviewees had registered to vote in Northern Ireland for other reasons, such as improving their credit score.

More than a third (37%) of survey respondents reported that they had voted in an election in Northern Ireland at least once. 31% voted in the most recent local council elections (in May 2014), 61% did not vote and 8 % moved to Northern Ireland after this time. The levels of turnout in the most recent Northern Ireland Assembly elections (in May 2011) were slightly lower, with only 17 % of participants voting. Of the 83 % who did not vote, 16% had moved to Northern Ireland after this election, and 1% (2 participants) were not eligible to vote as they had not yet turned 18.

As well as analysing the frequency of voter turnout in different types of elections, the survey also aimed to assess participants' reasons for voting or not voting. As outlined in Chapter 5, many migrants had come to Northern Ireland to seek greater economic security, or the chance for a 'normal life' (see Gałasińska and Kozłowska 2009), and often did not have political participation at the top of their agenda. Furthermore, they often felt they had a better standard of living than they could achieve back home. This could result in the feeling that nothing needed to be changed and therefore there was no need to vote (see also Garapich and Driver, 2012a; 2012b; Maxwell, 2010).

However, as demonstrated in Table 6.8 below, a fairly small proportion of survey respondents (5%) said they had not voted because they were not interested in politics. The most common reason given by survey respondents for not voting was a lack of knowledge of local

⁵⁰ Private communication with Newry and Mourne District Council

politics/political parties (nearly half of respondents) followed by the failure to register on time (20%) and a lack of awareness of voting rights (12%).

Table 6.8: Reasons for not voting in elections in Northern Ireland

Reason	Number/percentage
I don't have enough knowledge of politics/political parties in Northern Ireland	54 (48%)
I didn't register on time	22 (20%)
I wasn't aware that I had the right to vote in Northern Ireland	14 (12%)
I think that only citizens of the UK or Ireland should have the right to vote in Northern Ireland	8 (7%)
I'm completely uninterested in politics	6 (5%)
No party represents me	5 (4%)
Other	4 (4%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 113)

Regarding knowledge of parties, a lack of sufficient English language skills (in order to understand how the political system works, follow debates and access information about party policies) also emerged as a barrier to electoral participation. The vast majority of those who had voted in Northern Ireland were all fairly fluent in English, which was necessary to gain understanding of the local political scene and the positions of the political parties. Even some of the interview participants who spoke good English reported that it was sometimes challenging to follow political developments and understand political speeches, given that the level of language skills required was often higher than those needed for everyday life. As shown in Table 6.9, only

13% of survey respondents with a 'basic' level of English had voted in elections in Northern Ireland, rising to 58% among those who described their English as 'fluent'.

Table 6.9: Cross-tabulation of levels of English proficiency and experience of voting in elections in Northern Ireland

Level of English	Have voted	Have never voted	No answer	Totals
Basic	2 (13%)	13 (87%)		15
Adequate	9 (33%)	18 (67%)		27
Good	16 (35%)	29 (63%)	1 (2%)	46
Very good	11 (26%)	31 (72%)	1 (2%)	43
Fluent	29 (58%)	21 (42%)		50
No answer	0	1	0	1
Totals	67	113	2	182

Source: Author's survey (n = 182)

Although the majority of interviewees knew that they had some voting rights in Northern Ireland, many were unable to distinguish between the different types of elections they were eligible to vote in, and even some of those who were well informed about politics were unaware of their voting rights in Northern Ireland Assembly elections. As outlined in Table 6.10, 60% of survey respondents knew that they had the right to vote in local council elections, 6% thought that they did not and 34% did not know. The survey showed lower levels of awareness regarding the right to vote in Northern Ireland Assembly elections, with only 37% aware of their right to vote and 52% not sure. Only around a third (33%) knew that they did not have the right to vote in UK Parliament

elections⁵¹, and just over half (53%) were aware of their right to participate in European Parliament elections.

Table 6.10: Knowledge of the right to vote in elections in Northern Ireland

Type of election	Yes	No	Don't know	Totals
Local council elections	60% (108)	6% (10)	34% (62)	180
Northern Ireland Assembly elections	37% (65)	11% (19)	52% (90)	174
UK Parliament elections	21% (36)	33% (57)	46% (78)	171
European Parliament elections	53% (36)	8% (57)	39% (78)	171

Source: Author's survey (n = 180, 174, 171, 171)⁵²

Despite feeling that they lacked knowledge of particular party policies, the survey findings demonstrated a significant level of interest in following political developments in the UK more generally and in Northern Ireland more specifically. More than half (58%) followed UK political commentary either daily or a few times a week, with a similar proportion (57%) following political commentary in Northern Ireland at the same frequency. Although these are lower than levels of following

⁵¹ Polish and other EU citizens cannot vote in UK parliamentary elections unless they have a British or Irish passport. Only 3 respondents to the survey had a British passport, therefore the vast majority of those who responded 'yes' to this question were mistaken.

⁵² This denotes the total respondents to each separate part of the question.

and discussing Polish politics, these figures demonstrate a fairly significant amount of interest in political affairs among the survey sample.

Table 6.11: Frequency of following political commentary (e.g. in newspapers/on TV/ on social media on UK politics)

Level of frequency	Number/percentage of participants
Daily	41 (22.5%)
A few times a week	63 (34.7%)
A few times a month	39 (21.4%)
Often	34 (18.7%)
Never	5 (2.7%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 182)

Table 6.12: Frequency of following political commentary in newspapers/on TV/ on social media on NI politics

Level of frequency	Number/percentage of participants
Daily	45 (25%)
A few times a week	59 (32%)
A few times a month	34 (19%)
Often	35 (19%)
Never	9 (5%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 182)

From the interviews it emerged that an important way of developing knowledge about UK and NI politics was through discussions with family and friends. The survey results supported this finding, with nearly a third (31%) discussing UK politics either daily or a few times a week, and the same proportion discussing NI politics at the same frequency (see Tables 6.13 and 6.14).

Table 6.13: Frequency of discussing UK politics with family or friends

Level of frequency	Number/percentage of participants
Daily	9 (5%)
A few times a week	47 (26%)
A few times a month	54 (30%)
Often	59 (32%)
Never	13 (7%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 182)

Table 6.14: Frequency of discussing NI politics with family and friends

Level of frequency	Number/percentage of participants
Daily	9 (5%)
A few times a week	45 (25%)
A few times a month	47 (26%)
Often	64 (35%)
Never	16 (9%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 181)

Participants' levels of knowledge about Northern Ireland varied prior to emigration, with some having very little previous knowledge of the place, its history and the political context (see also Svašek, 2009). Discussions with friends and family (both Polish and 'local') were highlighted as an important influence on the development of new political views. Participants explained that learning about politics and political parties was part of a wider process of learning to live in Northern Ireland, as their first impressions of certain physical spaces within the city and hearing stories about the conflict often left them

feeling apprehensive about how they would be received by local communities. This apprehension could constitute a barrier to developing local relationships and thus developing knowledge of the local political context (as highlighted previously in Chapter 5).

As some of those I interviewed spoke very little English, and had little contact with non-Polish people, this presented a barrier to developing these kinds of relationships. Dorota (a fluent English speaker) found that the people she met were often keen to share their experiences of life during the Troubles and their opinions on the present situation. As Dorota acknowledges, although people may be keen to share their views, the history of Northern Ireland is contested and may be interpreted differently by people from different backgrounds. As a result, participants often stressed the importance of getting to know people from different community backgrounds in order to acquire a more balanced view, as Dorota explained:

People really like to talk about the Northern Ireland history and about the heritage and the culture and they really like to share their experience living here, even locals, about how it was. Like older people tell me when they were younger and Catholics and Protestants were really separated and how it influenced their life, and so that's always interesting to listen, but there is always two sides of the story.

For some participants, the specific socio-political context of Northern Ireland provided a greater incentive to learn about its history and politics than if they had been living in another part of the UK. However, their curiosity about the local context did not necessarily translate into a greater desire to get more actively involved. Edyta enjoyed watching local current affairs programmes in order to understand a wider range of public opinion, but the influence of the past on current political debates could act as a disincentive to becoming more fully engaged:

In NI it is all mixed-up, because all your troubles are... were moved to your government, with people who got there, let's put it that way, and their background is still in your politics nowadays. So, it's hard

to explain, if you had fresh people in your government then that would be completely different, that would be a new start of politics.

Adam also explained that the sensitivity of the issues could make it difficult to discuss politics with local people. Although he took a keen interest in local politics, he said that he would be more likely to discuss political developments in Northern Ireland with his Polish friends. As Adam's comments highlight, the attitudes of the longer-term settled community have a clear impact on the degree to which migrants feel part of the political community and feel comfortable to participate politically:

I: And would you discuss politics a lot with people here, or your friends here?

K: Yes, with my Polish friends but it's difficult with local people, the local people feel, and rightly so, that they have more right to comment about local politics than myself, because I'm still relatively new and they've lived here all their life. And I sort of accept this attitude, because probably if somebody speaks to me about Poland, I feel exactly the same way, so sometimes it's not easy, but sometimes I would discuss it.

Although it is difficult to make direct comparisons due to the lack of data in other contexts, Polkowski's (2017:10) work may shed further light on this issue. In his research with migrant workers in Scotland and Northern Ireland, Poles living in Scotland felt that they could discuss their views on the independence referendum relatively freely, whereas Poles living in NI were more cautious when discussing political matters with people that they didn't know well.

Although some participants said that they had always felt welcome to engage in local politics, others felt that they were not fully accepted. For example, several participants had been met with some suspicion or confusion when they turned up to vote at local polling stations. Again, this links back to the politics of belonging, and the ways in which belonging is shaped through the interactions between newcomers and longer-term settled residents (Hopkins and Blackwood, 2011; Kofman,

1995; Secor, 2004). This was highlighted in Damian's experience of going to vote, as outlined in the following exchange:

I: And how did you feel about going to vote, what was the experience like?

M: I think it was quite ok, but local people were quite suspicious about me being there. I guess my polling station is on the X Road, and they were like, I think they were quite surprised to see me there. You know yourself that NI is very community orientated and basically if you go to vote you have people from one community going to a certain location to vote, and if you have someone who is not part of that community, they would feel uncomfortable. It's nothing to do with being negative about migrants. I think it's being, trying to secure your own position due to what was happening in Northern Ireland for several years.

I: So it's more of a general suspicion of someone that they don't recognise, because they'd all tend to know each other in some of these communities?

M: Yes, because this guy's not part of our society, you know, and we don't know him, and why he's there, now he's deciding to vote and maybe he's trying to change voting patterns in our area. I think it was just a more general suspicion, there are people who are generally suspicious but it was ok, it was a good experience.

Many participants stressed that they needed time to feel a part of a place and make sure that they had enough knowledge before they could make responsible and informed voting decisions. This explains why rates of voter turnout were higher among survey respondents who had lived in Northern Ireland for longer (see Table 6.15).

Table 6.15: Cross-tabulation of length of time living in Northern Ireland and voting behaviour in the most recent local council elections (May 2014)

Length of time in Northern Ireland	Voted	Didn't vote	Wasn't living in Northern Ireland at the time	Totals
1 – 2 years	0	14 (50%)	14 (50%)	28
3 – 4 years	4 (18%)	18 (82%)	0	22
5 – 6 years	6 (29%)	15 (71%)	0	21
7 – 8 years	11 (37%)	18 (60%)	1 (3%)	30
9 – 10 years	21 (40%)	32 (60%)	0	53
11 +	14 (54%)	12 (46%)	0	26

Source: Author's survey (n = 180)

Iza's story of how she and her husband had decided to start voting emphasised the importance of attachments to place in underpinning migrants' political engagement. Her narrative highlights that although EU migrants have the legal right to participate in local elections, participants often saw it as necessary to 'earn' the right to vote through familiarising themselves with the context and becoming well informed about the local situation and political parties:

So it goes like, in our case, it was like climbing the ladder, that was the next step, but then you don't know much about it, so you don't want to be involved. You don't want to make irresponsible or uninformed choices, so you need to get the confidence at one point,

so you need to find out from different people, getting different perspectives on it. Once you get, it took us basically 7 years to get to the point where we were like ok, we more or less know what is going on here, we have a partial picture of it and we think this partial picture gives us enough to be able to make informed choices.

Echoing this sense of commitment to place, Bożena had lived in Belfast for nine years and moved house seven times during that period.

Through her job in a supermarket she met her husband, who is from Belfast, and they moved to a Housing Executive (local authority) house on a predominantly Protestant estate in the suburbs of the city. She had never felt compelled to vote previously but voted for the first time in the NI local elections in 2014. She explained her decision in reference to her sense of attachment to the housing estate where they lived:

I didn't vote before, because before I just didn't feel like I had to. Now I am sure I'm going to stay on the estate for longer, probably, so I think that every voice is important. I think that it is important because you are living on the estate and you want your estate to be better. So it's not only for Northern Ireland you can vote, but the estate one is important too.

Bożena participated in an interview along with one of her close friends, Edyta, who was living in East Belfast at the time but was in the process of buying a house on the same estate as her. Edyta explained that she was not interested in voting, but Bożena felt that her friend would change her mind when she moved to her new home:

I think Edyta will start voting when she will buy her house. Then she will live on the estate, and she will see, same as me actually. Before I didn't have to, because I didn't feel like I had to, now she will I think.

In response, Edyta explained that, like Bożena, she had moved house several times since arriving in Belfast. She was looking forward to becoming more settled in one particular area, which she agreed may have an impact on her attitude towards political participation:

As Bożena said, probably if that would be my place, then I may [vote] because now, I always feel that it's just a temporary place, you know, I wasn't really, I was just living there, so...

As this quotation highlights, movement within borders as well as across them also has an impact on migrants' (and non-migrants') sense of place. As King (2012:137) highlights, a false dichotomy is often drawn between internal and international migration, when in fact these can be viewed as arbitrarily drawn categories and the effects and experiences related to both 'types' of migration may overlap. Due to moving home in Belfast several times, Edyta felt that she was still living in a 'temporary' place even though she planned to stay in Northern Ireland over the longer-term. She believed that sense of relative permanence linked to owning her own home would give her a greater sense of having a stake in place, which may in turn encourage her towards greater political engagement.

As outlined in Chapter 5, the majority of interviewees had come to Northern Ireland with the intention of staying only for the short-term. However, many had since made the decision to settle, either for good or over the medium to long-term. The wellbeing of children played a significant role in migrants' future settlement intentions, as those with families were often reluctant to disrupt children's education once they had entered the school system (see also Ryan et al. 2009; Ryan and Sales, 2013). Previous research also found that migrants who arrived in the UK as part of family or friendship networks and with school-age children were less likely to relocate internally compared to those who came via recruitment agencies and did not have children with them (Trevena et al. 2013).

The decision to stay for a longer period appeared to have an impact on voting behaviour, as a number of interviewees became more interested in political engagement once they had decided that they would not return to Poland in the short-term. Although these decisions were often left open to change at a later date (with care of elderly parents or their own retirement often cited as potential reasons for going back) the decision to vote did appear to require a certain level of commitment to making a life in Northern Ireland, if not 'forever' then at least 'for now'.

As demonstrated in Table 6.16 below, the majority of survey respondents who said they would stay in Northern Ireland for either 10+ years or permanently also answered that they planned to vote in the upcoming Northern Ireland Assembly elections (63% and 56% respectively). Among those who said that they didn't know how long they would stay, 34% expressed the intention to vote.

Table 6.16: Cross-tabulation of intended length of stay in Northern Ireland and intentions towards voting in the next NI Assembly elections (in May 2016)

	Plan to vote	Do not plan to vote	Not sure	Totals
Less than 2 years	1 (14%)	3 (43%)	3 (43%)	7
2 – 5 years	4 (44%)	0	5 (56%)	9
5 – 10 years	1 (11%)	0	8 (89%)	9
10+ years	12 (63%)	1 (5%)	6 (32%)	19
Permanently	49 (56%)	6 (7%)	32 (37%)	87
I don't know	16 (34%)	6 (13%)	25 (53%)	47
Totals	83	16	79	179

Source: Author's survey (n = 179)

As well as viewing political engagement as underpinned by commitment to and a sense of having a stake in place, some interviewees also saw their right to vote in elections through the lens of a 'monetized contract' (Thomas, 2002:335). Danuta saw voting as a right granted to her in virtue of the taxes that she paid:

I am an immigrant living here so I pay taxes here, I contribute but also I take, so in a way I want to shape what's happening here as well, if I can. Of course, the question is if we really can but if there are more people like me then we could.

Along with claiming a right to participation through his position as an economic contributor, Janusz saw voting as a way of giving something back to society and showing his appreciation for being accepted by longer-term settled residents; thus as an element of his own personal 'place-based contract':

Me and my family, we want to be a part of this society and life here, because we work here and we pay taxes here, but also we are very grateful. Honestly we are very grateful that we have been accepted here.

Scuzzarello's (2015a) research on migrants' voting behaviour has emphasised the role of collective identities and 'dual identification' in motivating migrants to participate in politics in the host country. Considering the voting behaviour of Polish and Somali migrants in London, she argues that a sense of identification with the host polity (Britain) as well as the home polity (Poland or Somalia) is a strong predictor of participation in local elections (ibid. p. 1227). However, my research found that although some participants described themselves as Polish-British or Polish-Irish, their rationale for participation in local elections tended to be much more closely bound up with a sense of having a stake in place, rather than affiliation with an ascribed national identity. A number of participants felt strongly Polish and felt that this was unlikely to change, but yet they still believed that it was important to participate in local politics in Northern Ireland. These findings add further weight to the importance of 'rescaling the polity' in order to recognise the complex and overlapping nature of identities and the influence of attachments at multiple scales, rather than aiming to make straightforward connections between national identities and a sense of political belonging.

The complexity of identities at multiple scales was highlighted by Justyna, a volunteer in a Polish community organisation who was also active in a Northern Irish political party. She had started voting in elections in Northern Ireland soon after arriving and had decided to stop voting in Polish elections, although she still saw herself as 'half-Polish, half-Irish'. She had a strong sense of attachment to the local area, which was her main driver for volunteering in the party and feeling that she wanted to play a role in local community life. When asked how she would describe her identity, she responded as follows:

European, even, I mean, I'm not maybe European but I was European when I was studying, at the minute I'm a piece of the furniture from Lurgan (laughs)... I'm definitely a person who lives in Europe and I am half-Polish, half-Irish, I would say.

Although Justyna had decided to stop voting in Polish elections in order to concentrate fully on participation in Northern Ireland, a number of other participants saw no conflict in continuing to engage in both polities. This reflects previous research findings that some migrants may simultaneously participate politically in both the home and host countries (Boccagni, 2011:90; Ehrkamp, 2005:346; Guarnizo, 2003; Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007:130; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011:1500). For example, Halina first came to Belfast as a student and stayed after completing her postgraduate studies. She had always considered voting to be a duty in Poland, and began voting in local elections soon after arriving in Northern Ireland:

As I said I never questioned that, following what happens and voting. These are, in my head, the basic duties and rights of a citizen. If I am called a resident here it means that I can participate in changing it here. I also think, taking it further, that I, compared to many people, am extremely privileged. Getting involved in public debate, in politics and in any other type of activities is a form of paying back what you have been given.

Although she did not plan to move back to Poland in the near future, Halina also remained committed to following political developments and voting in Polish elections. She was also involved in initiatives which

aimed to influence Polish government policy, such the coordination of an open letter from emigrés which called on the government to accept more refugees from Syria and neighbouring countries. As demonstrated by the quotation below, an important driver for continuing participation in Polish politics was a sense of care for place, as well as the practical implications for her family. This demonstrates how it is often difficult to distinguish the emotional aspects of stakeholdership from the practical ones:

Well, my family lives there and I care about Poland and I can't... Well I can't exclude that I might go back there one day and I would like to be able to take care of my parents, when they need that. Actually I have always thought that whenever they need me I would go back, but I'm not entirely sure today.

Many Poles follow political developments in Russia and Ukraine with particular interest, given their geographical proximity to Poland and the countries' historical and geopolitical links. Halina explained that although she had always followed politics and considered voting to be important, the conflict in Ukraine in 2014 had been a catalyst for her becoming more involved in local politics and volunteering in Northern Ireland. She gradually moved from donating money to becoming more actively involved in charity work, such as supporting asylum seekers and organising charity collections for the homeless. This was provoked, in part, by the sense of powerlessness she felt to effect change overseas:

Ukraine was the starting point, and that started me off, I realised that I needed to do something, and because unfortunately everyone here is helpless in the matters of Ukraine, but at least you can try to do something else.

In a similar way, Magda also explained that recent global events had affected the way that she thought about her involvement in politics in Northern Ireland. The conflict in Ukraine, combined with a social media campaign to encourage migrants to vote in local elections, were key factors in her decision to vote in NI in 2014:

The conflict in Ukraine has made me think more about what we have influence on and what we can do. In some situations we are powerless but in others we have the right to have a say, in order to change something. If it hadn't been for that being publicized and for that situation, maybe I wouldn't have voted, but the campaign raised my awareness.

Halina and Magda's stories demonstrate the importance of examining the complexity of attachments at multiple scales and how these may interact with one another to produce different types of political engagement, rather than simply creating binary oppositions between the 'global' and the 'local' (see also Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2006). In addition, they underline the complexity of migrants' personal 'place-based contracts' and how they may develop their rationales for political engagement in relation to multiple reference points. In sum, they highlight that 'local' and 'global' attachments are not necessarily incompatible, but that in fact one may constitute or shape the other.

Belonging in political communities at multiple scales: the case of UK Parliamentary elections

My research primarily focused on exploring participation in local council and Northern Ireland Assembly elections because EU migrants do not have the right to vote in national elections unless they also hold a British or an Irish passport. Of the 41 people I interviewed, 3 held a British passport and 1 held an Irish passport.⁵³ Among the survey sample, only 3 out of 182 respondents held a British passport. As the interviews and ethnographic participant observation were primarily carried out between September 2014 and September 2015, and the

⁵³ Although those born in Northern Ireland can choose to have either a British or an Irish passport (or both), migrants to Northern Ireland can only apply for a UK passport (providing they meet the residency requirements and other criteria). The only way to acquire an Irish passport is through having an Irish parent or grandparent or marrying an Irish citizen.

survey was carried out in early 2016, the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU had not yet taken place. Although some participants were already concerned about the impact of a potential Brexit on their right to remain in Northern Ireland, at this time the majority maintained that there was no need to acquire a second passport as their EU status still guaranteed them the right to live and work in the UK. Among those who had acquired a passport or were actively planning to apply for one in the near future, very few said that gaining the right to vote in national elections was a significant aspect of their motivation.

Interviewees' views varied regarding the rights of non-nationals to vote in UK Parliament elections, although the majority were accepting of the status quo. Alina was a fairly recent migrant who had come to Northern Ireland to join her fiancé after finishing her undergraduate studies. At the time of the interview she was doing manual work in a bakery through an agency and saving money for her wedding. She explained that they intended to stay in Northern Ireland for a number of years and probably have children there, but they would return to Poland before the children started school:

As you said we can vote for some local Parliament, so I think that it's fair that we can't vote for the UK Parliament because we are just temporary citizens, let's say, so we shouldn't decide about some higher institutions, just about our local politics which we are involved in. We should have a right to manage it somehow but when it comes to these higher branches or higher Parliament, we shouldn't interrupt it. I think that's fair.

Her perception of herself as a temporary resident justified her view that non-citizens should have a limited influence on shaping politics.

However, some of those who had lived in Northern Ireland for longer had the opinion that migrants with permanent residency should be granted the same rights as UK nationals, despite not holding formal citizenship. For example, Halina claimed that based on her contribution

to society (both financially through tax and in terms of her wider civic engagement) she should have the right to vote:

I think that those with permanent residency should be allowed to vote in national elections. Permanent residency means that you live here and you influence this country, you pay your taxes for its functioning and you should have the right to vote and decide how it works.

Along with several other participants, Halina's main reason for not applying for citizenship was that she could not afford it. Not being able to vote in UK elections was also a bone of contention for Ela, who moved to Northern Ireland as a child. At the time of the interview, Ela did not realise that she did not have the right to vote in UK Parliament elections. When we spoke in the winter of 2014, she told me that she was planning to vote in the 2015 general election now that she had turned 18. When I explained that she could not do this without citizenship, she was very disappointed. She noted the unfairness of the fact that her main barrier to voting was financial (in that she couldn't currently afford to apply for citizenship) although she had lived most of her life in the UK and was committed to political engagement there:

I think it is kind of getting to racism, because I mean, we're here legally, it's not like we are here illegally and many of us have lived here for so long. I understand that there should be time limits on how long you stay here before you can vote but I mean, I've been here most of my life, I've been here 10 years. Well it will give the opportunity for people who are anti-immigration to put forward their cause but we can't defend ourselves, basically.

For those who had already applied for British citizenship, their decision was mainly linked to a desire to secure their future in the United Kingdom or to accrue the additional advantages associated with a British passport (such as visa-free travel to countries like the US and Canada). Parallels can be drawn with Ong's (1999:1) notion of 'flexible' citizenship, where the possession of multiple passports becomes a 'matter of confidence in uncertain political times'. In this sense, additional passports become a form of cultural or social capital, for

example through allowing greater freedom to travel. Some interviewees also believed that they would be at an advantage in the UK labour market if they were able to say that they were British rather than Polish citizens. Given the relatively high cost of the application, it tended to be migrants in higher-paying jobs who had applied or were actively thinking about applying.

Aneta and her husband were considering applying for British citizenship because they planned to stay in Northern Ireland permanently and had recently bought a house. However, along with these more practical considerations she also viewed citizenship as a way of solidifying her feelings of belonging in Northern Ireland:

I think that being here and if I'm starting to treat this as home, I should become more close to it as well through citizenship. Why not?

Upon discussing this further it emerged she was largely motivated by the desire to visibly demonstrate her commitment to living in Northern Ireland for other people to see, rather than the expectation that having a passport would have an impact on her own feelings of belonging. This links back to wider debates regarding the interconnectedness of different aspects of belonging (personal, social and legal) and the ways in which the shifting political landscape makes these more or less salient in different places and at different points in time. As this quotation illustrates, possession of a passport becomes a marker of belonging or a tool in negotiating the 'politics of belonging' in periods of political uncertainty:

I: So do you think you will feel more at home when you have a passport?

A: I think I would feel the same at home but kind of to show that I really feel it as home maybe for other people to see. Because there are a lot of voices about ethnic minorities just coming here and being on benefits and taking money and so on and not doing anything else, so I want to show that you can be an ethnic minority

but you can also do a lot for the communities here and getting involved and becoming a part of it, formally as well.

Conclusions

This chapter carried out a detailed examination of Polish migrants' voting practices from a transnational perspective, considering the importance of feelings of belonging and attachments to place in shaping political engagement. Conceptually, it continued to develop the notion of the 'place-based contract' by demonstrating how this can be employed to analyse migrants' rationales for participation in electoral politics across multiple polities and at different scales. Participants' attitudes towards electoral participation did not stay static, emphasising the dynamic nature of the contract and the ways in which migrants' views continue to be shaped in relation to both personal and external influences. Although length of time in the country and future plans influenced migrants' voting behaviour in Northern Ireland, some participants still retained strong practical and emotional ties to Poland and a feeling of sustained membership in the polity. This motivated their continued political engagement in Polish elections although most had no plans to return to their home country in the near future.

The chapter also demonstrated the importance of 'rescaling the polity' and considering the role of identities and attachments at multiple scales in motivating migrants' political engagement. Although some previous research (and indeed, much government policy) focuses on the nation-state as the assumed scale of political belonging for migrants, feeling 'British' or 'Irish' did not appear to be a prerequisite to electoral participation for the participants in this research. Indeed, it may be the case that given the exclusionary nature of these identities in the context of Northern Ireland (as denoting belonging to 'one side' or 'the other'), hybrid identities and identifications with the locality gave migrants an alternative way of negotiating belonging within a sectarian space. The

next chapter will continue to develop these themes, by considering how migrants develop relationships to political parties and the role of place in shaping their political affiliations.

Chapter Seven: The formation of political identities and party preferences

As international migration has increased, greater numbers of people live outside the political communities in which they have grown up, and may simultaneously participate in multiple political systems.

Consequently, migration scholars have begun to examine the ways in which migrants participate in these different places and how their political affiliations in both the sending and receiving countries are shaped (e.g. Boccagni, 2011; LaFleur and Sanchez-Dominguez, 2014; McIlwaine and Bermudez, 2011;2015). The preceding chapters highlighted the importance of place in shaping migrants' political engagement, through their participation in civil society organisations and through their voting practices. This chapter continues to emphasise the importance of place and political engagement at multiple scales as a way of understanding migrants' political affiliations and voting decisions in both home and host country contexts.

The chapter begins by outlining existing research in this area. It continues to examine migrants' political engagement through a transnational lens, considering the ways in which participants developed their political awareness in Poland and their attitudes towards political parties, before discussing present attitudes towards Polish political parties in the context of transnational participation. The second part of the chapter focuses on how migrants' political affiliations have developed in the receiving country context of Northern Ireland and the rationales which underpin their electoral decisions. Finally, the chapter concludes by considering migrants' involvement in political parties in Northern Ireland and their experiences of this type of engagement.

The chapter will highlight the need to pay more attention to how migrants' political affiliations are shaped by multiple influences in both the home and the host country contexts, rather than just by their

position as a migrant in the receiving society. It also argues for the need to pay closer attention to the role of place in shaping these attachments (and how migrants' social networks and personal relationships play a role in this), as well as considering the role of political parties. This could help to account for political change as well as understanding why voting patterns may stay constant in a particular area, even in the case of rapid demographic changes. It also makes a contribution towards the need to understand how multiple and overlapping identities influence political engagement (particularly in the context of a deeply divided society), contributing to debates about migrants' political integration in the specific context of Northern Ireland.

Understanding the role of parties in political socialisation

Political party membership is declining across Europe, but yet parties continue to play an important role in the process of democratic governance (Whiteley, 2011:22). They facilitate individuals' engagement with the political system, they galvanise publics around particular sets of values and beliefs, and they provide relative stability to the political system which allows governments to govern (Johnston and Pattie, 2008:362). Electoral geographers have highlighted the various types of political cleavages along which different societies are organised, such as class, culture, or the rural/urban divide. Although the class cleavage predominated throughout the twentieth century, its salience has arguably been weakened due to increased prosperity (resulting in a greater focus on post-materialist matters, such as the environment) and a rise in 'issue voting' (ibid. p. 363).

When it comes to the shaping of political interests, identities and affiliations, place plays a crucial role (Agnew, 1987; Agnew, 1996) as Johnston and Pattie (2008:370) explain:

Voting is not just a place-based act, the outcome of which can be mapped. It is a place-based performance, within which interactions both among individual voters and between them and the political actors seeking their support take place. Many people vote the way they do because of the places in which they have learned their political values and identities and the ways that political parties and other interest groups base their search for electoral support on place-based strategies.

As this quotation highlights, political attitudes are influenced by processes of socialisation which happen in places, both large and small (Johnston and Pattie, 2006). Although party membership is declining, considerable evidence demonstrates that local campaigning and engagement at the grassroots are still important means of generating support for parties (Johnston and Pattie, 2008:364). While the internet and social media have provided parties with new opportunities to mobilise voters and publicise their policy platforms, personal invitations to participate in civic and political activity (particularly for the less engaged) are more effective than general calls to action (Pattie and Johnston, 2013:188).

A considerable body of research on voting behaviour has focused on individual attributes (such as gender, age or class) in order to predict if or how a person will vote (Inglehart and Norris, 2000; Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2006; Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Thorburn, 1997; Verba et al. 1997). However, it has also been argued that more attention should be paid to how political attitudes are shaped at different spatial scales (such as the household or neighbourhood), rather than focusing only on the individual and the 'wider societal' level (Pattie and Johnston, 2013:178). This body of work (e.g. Cox 1969a; 1969b and Reynolds, 1969a; 1969b) argues that 'spatially clustered' social networks (such as within households, families and neighbourhoods) are the sites of discussion where people develop and potentially change their political views and party affiliations, resulting in the outcome that 'people who talk together vote together' (Johnston and Pattie, 2008:366). Challenging work which views voting decisions as made by individual,

rational actors, it highlights that voting behaviour is often influenced by people's perceptions of what they think others around them are likely to do (and what is perceived as acceptable in that community), rather solely according to their own individual interests (Pattie and Johnston, 2013:178).

Regarding the political affiliations of migrants in the host country, some research has argued that due to their position in the labour market (with a greater proportion working in low-skilled, low-paid jobs than in the population at large) they are more likely to align themselves with left-wing political parties and related organisations such as trade unions who are perceived as more attentive to their needs (Garbaye, 2005; Kasic and Triandafillyou, 2005; Però, 2007b). However, research with Central and Eastern European migrants in London found that many focus group participants tended to support Conservative party policies, based on socially and economically conservative views shaped in their countries of origin. However, negative rhetoric about immigrants was one factor dissuading them from voting for the party (Driver and Garapich, 2012a; 2012b).

Regarding external voting practices, the majority of research has focused on emigrants' rationales for participating in home country elections, rather than on their political preferences. Indeed, Boccagni's (2011) research concluded that as only a minority of Ecuadorians were motivated to vote in order to support a particular party, migrants' political choices were not worthy of closer investigation. However, scholars have also argued that emigrants' voting choices can function as 'social remittances' in terms of sending views or opinions back to the home country (Grabowska and Garapich, 2016; Levitt, 1998), making migrants' political preferences in home country elections a worthy subject of examination in their own right.

As migrants settle in new destinations but retain ties to multiple places, attention should be paid to how their positioning in different sets of

social relationships influences their political identities and practices. Place plays an important role in these processes, as 'migrants are not free-floating ciphers of identity moving through space, they are situated in specific social and historical conditions which are not of their own making' (Geoghegan, 2009:41). Consequently, we should consider how migrants' relationships to place can influence their political outlook, both in relation to the home country and the receiving society. This also involves recognising that migrants have multiple identities, and their status as a minority or an immigrant in the host country may not always play a significant role in their political decision-making. Whilst identities are 'place-based' they are not necessarily 'place-bound', in that 'they are not the result of purely local experiences' (Castree, 2009:165). To the contrary, 'locally variable identities partly arise from 'outside' influences' (ibid.).

Despite a growing body of work on migration to Northern Ireland, little is known about the ways in which migrants develop new political affiliations and make voting decisions in the context of a deeply divided society. However, policy developments have recognised the changing demographics of the NI population and the failure of public representatives to reflect this growing diversity (OFMDFM, 2015:30). The need to diversify representation refers to the growing minority ethnic population in the region, but it is also relevant to promoting the visibility of other under-represented groups such as women and people with disabilities.

Consequently, this chapter aims to make an empirical contribution to knowledge by advancing understanding of how migrants' political affiliations are formed in relation to both the home and the host country. It demonstrates the complex ways in which the political identities of newcomers to Northern Ireland are shaped, with relationships to place playing a key role. It highlights that political views are not shaped in a vacuum, thus drawing attention to the importance of neighbourhood, community ties and social networks in

developing migrants' political affiliations. Migrants to Northern Ireland are not a 'blank state'; they often arrive with established political views and may draw on existing historical and cultural reference points to make sense of the new environment in which they find themselves. The development of their relationships with place (as conceived of here through the 'place-based contract'), intersects with other aspects of their identities, thus influencing their political affiliations and activities.

As highlighted in Chapter 4, little is known about the relationship between ethnic minority/migrant communities and political parties in Northern Ireland, and previous analysis has been carried out from the perspective of the parties and their manifestos. This chapter will provide original qualitative and quantitative data on the attitudes of Polish migrants towards political parties in Northern Ireland, which will go some way towards addressing this gap in knowledge, understanding and debate.

Formation of political identities and affiliations in Poland

Regarding early experiences of political socialisation, it emerged that families had played a key role (see also Pattie and Johnston, 2000:58). Although the majority of participants were too young to have been directly involved in the Solidarity movement which led to the fall of communism (or, conversely, in the Communist Party) many of their parents had been engaged in one or the other of these organisations and this had tended to shape their early conversations about politics. For example, Paweł explained that when he became old enough to vote, his father would often give advice on which party he and his siblings should support:

Well, it was sort of our family joke. Our father would gather us around the table and say, I'm not going to press you or influence your views, but here is what I think, but then he said that you do what you want. So he would help us to understand some of the

things but he would also encourage us to have a good view based on information we could get from newspapers, with a slight warning that they could be biased, which we knew that that they were. I, during my university time, I studied propaganda and 'For Power', which was the newspaper propaganda during the communist time, and because of that I kept being a bit suspicious whenever I was looking at newspapers and what views are presented.

The political landscape in Poland has shifted rapidly since the fall of communism with a number of new parties forming and disbanding within the last twenty years (see Chapter 4). Regarding support for parties when they had lived in Poland, the majority of interviewees did not have strong party affiliations, although they often defined themselves as 'anti-communist'. For example, Magda explained that her father's involvement in the Solidarity movement had dissuaded her from supporting parties which had links with communism:

I: And did you support a particular party in Poland?

M: Well it varied but I wasn't really, no... No I wouldn't be that.... But obviously my dad was a big Solidarity campaigner, so when I was a child this would be my sort of ideology. Yes, how I was brought up, definitely, definitely against communism, that would be what, if I had to define myself.

Despite not having strong party affiliations, interviewees often explained their political views in reference to their position on the left-right spectrum. For example, Agata considered herself to be left-wing or centre-left, but she also focused on the trustworthiness of the candidates as well as the particular parties:

Emmm (long pause) well I did go to elections and I voted and it would be kind of more centre or left... either, and I would really look more at particular people and look at individual sort of integrity more than what the programme is, because even within the same party there could be different people. So I would actually look at a particular person, you know, even when they are in the same party views of different members may be different, so I will investigate almost, you know, and try to find the person I can trust, that what they are saying they will not change in a moment to something else.

Contact with politicians in Poland was limited whilst living there. A few interviewees had friends or family members who were involved in politics, or they had met a politician as part of activities at school or work. For example, Damian's father had (unsuccessfully) run for the local council, and Martyna's uncle had been a sitting representative in the Polish Parliament. However, no one reported contacting a politician to lobby on an issue or to ask for help with a problem. Several participants expressed the view that the relationship between the electorate and their representatives did not function in this way and they had never considered initiating this kind of contact. Part of this reluctance could be traced to the mistrust of the state which was engendered during the period of communist rule, as Roman explained:

For many years which we call Russian occupation, we were taught sometimes in a very brutal way to not trust forces of oppression, so I don't think I am alone in it, but you will probably find many Polish people wouldn't trust the police and wouldn't trust any government organisations.

A few participants were closely aligned with particular political parties during their time in Poland, but became disillusioned due to the perceived failure of these parties to achieve real change (see Chapter 6). For example, during university Adam was a member of the youth division of the political party 'Platforma Obywatelska' (PO).

Yes, Young Democrats, and this is something which people are sort of not proud of now. But back then it was a different political party, and after all these years it's better not to mention that you support them. After 10 years of running the country they've ruined everything they could, so...

As outlined in Chapter 6, a number of interviewees had been positive about the election of PO in 2007 and saw it as a chance for change. Several participants had supported the party while in Poland or shortly after leaving the country, but they had since changed their minds. Discussion of the party (and the state of Polish politics in general) often provoked a strong emotional reaction, such as that of Janusz, who had voted for the party in the past:

I'm very angry... I'm absolutely... I'm so angry, that when I talk about Polish politics, and especially you know... no, no... it is unbelievable how many young people are cheated.

My survey included questions about current membership of and support for Polish political parties. Only one respondent was a member of a political party in Poland at the time of the survey. As highlighted in Chapter 6, voter turnout was mostly motivated by a sense of civic duty and a continued feeling of responsibility towards Poland, rather than the desire to support a particular party. A fifth of survey respondents supported a political party, three-fifths did not support any party and a fifth was not sure. As highlighted in Table 7.1, the two largest parties (PO and PiS) attracted the most support from survey respondents, with Kukiz 15, a newly established party, being the third most popular.

Table 7.1: Preferences of respondents who declared their support for a particular political party in Poland

Political party	Number/percentage of respondents
<i>Platforma Obywatelska</i> (PO) – Citizens' Platform	10 (29%)
<i>Prawo i Sprawiedliwość</i> (PiS) – Law and Justice	8 (23%)
<i>Kukiz 15</i> – Led by Paweł Kukiz	7 (20%)
<i>Nowoczesna</i> – Modern	4 (11%)
<i>Razem</i> ⁵⁴ – Together	3 (9%)
<i>Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej</i> - Democratic Left Alliance)	1 (3%)
'Other' answers (2)	'Any/all but PiS?' (1) PO or <i>Nowoczesna</i> (1) (6%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 35)

⁵⁴ *Razem* is a left-wing political party which was formed in May 2015. It is pro-European and takes a liberal stance on social issues such as abortion and LGBT rights.

Regarding the most recent Presidential elections, 29% of survey respondents voted in the first round of the Presidential elections and 24% voted in the second round. As outlined in Table 7.2, Paweł Kukiz was the most popular candidate (see Chapter 6), followed by the candidates from the two largest parties, PO and PiS. As the two candidates with the largest number of overall votes go through to the second round, Paweł Kukiz (who came third) was eliminated and the Presidential election was won by Andrzej Duda (PiS), unseating the incumbent, Komorowski (PO). As noted in Chapter 6, the support for Paweł Kukiz (who received the greatest number of votes from external voters based in Belfast and in the UK more widely) was seen by some interviewees as a protest vote, or as a way of sending a message back to their home country that they were against the status quo. In this sense, it can be viewed as a kind of 'social remittance' (Grabowska and Garapich, 2016; Levitt, 1998), symbolically important although of less practical influence.

Table 7.2: Voter preferences in the first round of the 2015 Polish Presidential elections

Name of Candidate	Number/percentage of respondents
Kukiz, Paweł (Kukiz 15')	18 (40%)
Komorowski, Bronisław (PO)	13 (37%)
Duda, Andrzej (PiS)	5 (14%)
Braun, Grzegorz (Independent) ⁵⁵	3 (9%)
Kowalski, Marian (<i>Ruch Narodowy</i> – National Movement) ⁵⁶	2 (4%)
Spoiled ballot	2 (4%)
'Other' answers (2)	'a' (invalid answer) (1) 'for the same reason as above' (1) (4%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 45)

⁵⁵ Grzegorz Braun is a journalist and film director who stood as an independent candidate in the 2015 Polish Presidential elections. He has broadly right-wing political views and is sceptical of the European Union.

⁵⁶ Ruch Narodowy is a political party which was formed in 2012 from an alliance of right-wing and far-right movements. It takes a strongly nationalist position which emphasises state sovereignty and is Euroceptic and anti-immigration.

Table 7.3: Voter preferences in the second round of the 2015 Polish Presidential elections

Candidate	Number/percentage of respondents
Komorowski, Bronisław	18 (49%)
Duda, Andrzej	15 (41%)
Spolied ballot	1 (3%)
'Other' answers (3)	3 (8%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 37)

Only a fifth of survey respondents professed support for a particular party. Many interviewees explained that a common tactic was to vote for the party that they considered as 'the lesser of two evils'. For those with more centrist views, this often meant continuing to vote for PO, even though they had lost faith in the party. However, interviewees also expressed support for smaller parties and candidates on the left (such as the newly formed *Zjednoczona Lewica* - United Left) or on the right (such as the *Ruch Narodowy* - National Movement).

Although she planned to vote in the Polish Presidential election in 2015, Ela found it difficult to choose a Polish political party to support. As she arrived in Northern Ireland at a young age, her main contact with Polish politics was through discussions with her parents and following Polish TV and online news. She explained the dilemma that she faced:

I think all the parties are terrible in Poland (laughs) basically the left, the kind of centre-left party, which is usually where I would be on the political spectrum, they don't do anything, and then the right-wing parties are all about the church and how you have to pay the church, and I don't agree with either of these things'.

Although none of the political parties were in line with Ela's views or expectations, she was determined to use her vote regardless. Her story demonstrates that although some migrants found it very difficult to choose a political party to vote for, the sense of civic duty to continue

participation often overrode this. Consequently, civic duty appeared to be a more significant driver of participation in home country elections than strong party support (see also Boccagni, 2011).

Shaping of political identities and affiliations in Northern Ireland

Migrants to Northern Ireland face specific challenges as they learn to navigate daily life in an environment which remains influenced by ethno-nationalist divisions. These divisions are reflected in politics, as the main political parties are often defined predominantly by their stance on the constitutional question (unionist or nationalist) rather than by other aspects of their ideological positions or political programmes (see Chapter 4). Adjusting to this new political landscape is not without its complications, as migrants enter a context where there is a strong sense of antagonism between these two dominant identities. Little (2004:8) emphasises the importance of recognising the intersectionality of identities and moving beyond the ‘orange and green divide’:

Problems emerge when we only understand Northern Ireland through the ‘two traditions paradigm’, which homogenises vastly differentiated groups of people and essentialises culture. As such it undermines the diversity in Northern Ireland and the plurality of values and arguments that exist there.

Nevertheless, it is the case that these two identities are still prevalent in public discourse and consciousness, and that they continue to play an important role in how politics is conducted. Increasing migration has sparked some debate about the role of ethnic diversity in challenging assumptions and writing alternative narratives about identity in Northern Ireland. While Belfast is often portrayed ‘as an exemplary divided or post-conflict city’; focusing only on the conflict between the two dominant groups ‘simplifies the messiness of social life and could perpetuate long-standing divisions’ (Doyle and McAreavey, 2014:466).

However, we should avoid uncritical acceptance of the idea that diversity will automatically help to dilute some of the tensions between the two largest groups, as there is some emerging evidence that migrants may align themselves with these existing identities rather than challenging them or creating new ones (ibid. p. 472).

As highlighted in previous chapters, contact with longer-term settled communities was a key way in which participants learned about local politics in Northern Ireland, along with internet research or watching films and reading books about the history of the conflict. A few interview participants had contact with local politicians through their jobs as ethnic minority support workers in NGOs. Several of the Polish-led organisations had also developed relationships with local MLAs and councillors. In addition, the research identified several Polish migrants who were members of political parties or who had run as candidates in local elections (although this type of participation was not widespread among the Polish population at large).

As outlined in Chapter 4, people from minority ethnic backgrounds are under-represented in politics in Northern Ireland and only one person from a minority ethnic background has ever held political office. Only 2% of survey respondents (4 participants) were members of a political party: 2 belonged to Sinn Féin and 2 belonged to the Green Party NI. Among the interviewees, three women had stood for local elections as SDLP candidates and one woman was an active member of the Green party. Those who had run for election had all been approached directly by the SDLP and invited to stand (although none of them were successful in getting elected). The interviewee who was active in the Green party had initially approached the party herself to find out more about their policies. They were enthusiastic about getting her involved in their activities, although she was not interested in becoming an election candidate.

Justyna, who stood in local elections for the SDLP on two occasions, had a keen interest in politics since she was a teenager and had been involved in the youth wing of the Polish SLD (Democratic Left Alliance). After finishing her studies in political science, she came to Northern Ireland and got her first job working in a hospital kitchen, before becoming self-employed as an interpreter. One of her friends (who set up a voluntary organisation to support Polish people) was contacted by a Polish priest who asked if she knew anyone who would be interested in standing as a candidate in the local elections. He was approached directly by the SDLP who were keen to field more candidates from an ethnic minority or migrant background. Upon meeting a representative of the party and discussing the proposal with them, Justyna decided that involvement with the party would allow her to support other migrants to a greater extent than she could do otherwise (through the interpreting and voluntary work that she was already involved in):

That was some extra thing I could do, because being involved with the office, it really sometimes really gives you the possibility to open the doors wider than if you are just, 'my name is Justyna and I would like to do this or that'. If you would say 'hello my name is Justyna and I'm representing migrant communities on behalf of the SDLP' you know; the doors are opening wider anyway, so you are not just some person from the street.

Although Justyna saw her role with the party as primarily to represent and support migrants (in virtue of her Polish language skills and understanding of their circumstances), she was also involved in other party activities, such as volunteering at the office and helping with canvassing and leafleting for UK Parliament elections. Although her experiences of volunteering with the party were largely positive and she really enjoyed interacting with the public, she acknowledged that it was necessary to have a thick skin in order to shake off the negative reactions that she occasionally encountered on the doorstep:

It's different reactions, really. Sometimes people recognise my accent, and ask what do you know about politics here, and just close the door in your face. Or they would say just 'no thank you'

but the most common reaction is 'alright, thank you' and let you go to other doors, because they don't really care like, you know (laughs). What else... you would have different reactions really, when I was standing for council, people were asking me 'where are you from? And things like that, 'why are you standing for council?' and I said look, I'm Polish but I wouldn't be only the councillor for Polish ones. I think that's the thing you have to say to people, sometimes people would say, 'you migrants, I can see you everywhere, even in politics'.

As well as being involved with parties, several participants had taken part in specific projects which aimed to raise awareness of political issues and boost political participation among migrants. For example, Emilia took part in a shadowing scheme which aimed to educate ethnic minorities about local politics and raise awareness of the issues affecting minority communities among local politicians. This involved pairing approximately 20 people from an ethnic minority background with a local councillor, who then brought them along to different meetings and events. Emilia enjoyed this experience and reported that it had increased her understanding of and interest in local politics:

A: He took me to council meetings and he took me to Stormont and it was absolutely great and we are still in contact with each other. In fact I have been speaking with him today, so a really good experience, really good, but unfortunately only a few people got involved in it, from both sides, from the council and ethnic minority groups, so it was only a few of us.

I: And did it change your views from beforehand to afterwards?

A: A lot, a lot, because the very first time, before I would read local papers regularly but I would only read in the local papers about council meetings and then I was able to be there myself and to see how it works.

Although it was a beneficial experience for her personally, she highlights that this initiative was only run on a fairly small scale. Moreover, she noted that time constraints were an issue for both elected representatives and scheme participants, with only around 5 (out of the initial 20 participants) completing the entire period of shadowing.

Ela had also been involved in several projects which aimed to promote political awareness and civic participation among young people. As she went through the school system in Northern Ireland she had the opportunity to get involved in such activities when she was a teenager. For example, while she was at secondary school, she was invited to become involved in the local youth council by a friend's father (who worked in the youth service):

He basically said you just talk about things and you get some trips, so come along, and actually I ended up really liking it, so I mean, we did get some trips but we ended up talking about things that really do matter, like in the area, like what we don't like and what we like...

Following this, she became involved with another project which aimed to educate young people about politics in Northern Ireland and to support them to become more politically engaged. Through this project she had the opportunity to meet local politicians and question them on different aspects of their policies.

Yeah, it's basically from one side they teach you how to do political journalism and you meet a lot of politicians and interview local councillors about their policies. Just so we know who we are voting for in the future, who we support, and I got an opportunity to go to Brussels and speak to MEPS, and it was a very good experience. So they educate young people politically.

Both Emilia and Ela found that participation in these activities enabled them to become more familiar with political parties and their policies. As noted in Chapter 6, participants' knowledge of political parties was generally quite low and not having sufficient knowledge of parties/local politics was the most common reason for not voting in elections in Northern Ireland. This was reflected in the proportion of survey respondents who declared support for particular political parties. My survey found that 14% of respondents supported a political party in Northern Ireland, 75% did not support any party and 11% were not sure. Of those who supported a particular party, the most popular choice was Alliance, followed by Sinn Féin (see Table 7.4).

Table 7.4: Preferences of respondents who declared their support for a particular political party in Northern Ireland

Party	Number/percentage of respondents
Alliance	8 (35%)
Sinn Féin	7 (30%)
Green party	3 (13%)
SDLP	3 (13%)
DUP	2 (9%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 23)

Although a fairly small proportion (14%) of survey respondents were supporters of a particular party, a significantly larger proportion (37%) had voted in at least one election in Northern Ireland, and almost a third (31%) of respondents had voted in the most recent local council election in May 2014. Consequently, we can consider voter choices in this election as a further indicator of participants' party preferences. In the local council elections, Sinn Féin was the most popular party among survey respondents with nearly a quarter of first preference votes, followed by the Alliance party with a fifth of first preference votes (see Table 7.5).

Table 7.5: Voter first preferences in NI local council elections (May 2014)

Party	Number
Sinn Féin	14 (24%)
Alliance Party	12 (20%)
I don't remember ⁵⁷	9 (15%)
DUP (Democratic Unionist Party)	8 (14%)
SDLP (Social Democratic and Labour Party)	7 (12%)
Green Party NI	6 (10%)
Other (not listed)	2 (3%)
UKIP (UK Independence Party)	1 (2%)

Source: Author's survey (n = 59)

As demonstrated by both support for parties and voting behaviour in the most recent elections, survey respondents showed a greater preference for parties designated as 'other' and nationalist parties, and a lesser preference for supporting unionist parties. In terms of their party preferences, 48% declared support for 'Other' parties, 43% for nationalist parties and 9% for unionist parties (see Table 7.4). In the case of the recent local elections, 36% voted for nationalist parties, 31% voted for 'Other' parties, and 15% voted for unionist parties⁵⁸ (see Table 7.5). However, it must also be stressed that the results displayed a wide range of preferences across parties, and there was no one party which was strongly favoured by the participants in my research.

As politics in Northern Ireland is structured along ethno-nationalist lines, it is interesting to consider the degree to which parties' positions

⁵⁷ I included this category as it emerged from the interviews that some participants had focused on the attributes of particular candidates and could not remember which party they were a member of.

⁵⁸ The remainder could not remember which party they voted for or voted for a party not listed in the survey.

on the constitutional question played a role in migrants' voting decisions. It is sometimes assumed that as newcomers to Northern Ireland, migrants will not have a position on this matter and their decision will be shaped solely by other factors. On the other hand, some interviewees had the perception that newcomers to Northern Ireland had to 'take sides' and align themselves with one community or the other. Attempts to fit migrants into existing binaries tend to assume that Poles will have stronger links to Catholic/nationalist communities, given the fact that Poland is a majority Catholic country (see Kempny, 2013; Svašek, 2009). In turn, this leads to the assumption that Poles are viewed as a threat to Protestant/Unionists, in that the presence of Polish migrants may tip the balance towards a Catholic majority in Northern Ireland. These assumptions may also be reflected in political parties' attitudes toward engagement with migrants, as Iwona observed:

It is difficult for Polish people to take sides, because, you know, in the past there has been an assumption made that because the Polish population is mainly Catholic, that they would straight away go for the republican parties, but you may be Catholic and unionist, which probably happens quite often within the Polish community. So the assumptions are not always valid, we cannot apply the same measures to the population. Even yesterday someone from the DUP said 'Oh, you know how Sinn Féin recruits all the Polish people, I think the DUP should recruit all the Muslim people', I was like 'excuse me?... I said that this is not quite the case.

As Iwona notes, common assumptions about migrants' political affiliations often do not stand up to empirical scrutiny. Survey respondents were more inclined to support nationalist or 'other' parties than unionist parties, but overall they expressed support and voting preferences for a wide range of political parties in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, the interviews demonstrated the complexity of their decision-making processes. Their stories highlighted how multiple identities and attachments, as well their previous experiences, influenced their new political affiliations and thus shaped the nature of the 'place-based contract' for each person.

For example, Damian explained that he would deliberately try to avoid unionist and nationalist parties and therefore would limit his choice to deciding between the parties designated as 'other':

Basically I'm trying to avoid orange and green politics, and I will try to avoid supporting the DUP and Sinn Féin, because I don't really like the way they are actually losing time on discussing, well, for me as an out-comer, as a person who doesn't, was not born in Northern Ireland and came here 10 years ago, some issues they discuss are not relevant, in my opinion. So of course I respect that, and I know that maybe some people in Northern Ireland feel that that's very important for them, to see this conversation happening, but not for me, so I don't really support them. The political party which I really like is the Greens, because they don't really focus on politics. In my opinion I'm really into community politics and I really like their approach because they try to stay away and avoid being involved in these really silly and unimportant topics, which I really like. They have a very healthy approach in my opinion, but you know, but I can't say that I would join, or I would fully support them as well.

As this quotation illustrates, Damian views nationalist and unionist parties as engaging in divisive rhetoric on matters which are of no interest to him. He liked the Green party not only because they stand outside of the nationalist/unionist divide, but also because he perceived them as having a more grassroots style of political engagement. He contrasted their approach with the 'traditional politics' conducted by the mainstream parties, which he compared to the political landscape in Poland:

Yeah, the usual traditional politics (in Northern Ireland) looks like Polish traditional usual politics. The usual politics, and I don't enjoy this level of politics, because for me it's a waste of time.

Although some participants, like Damian, avoided voting along nationalist/unionist lines, other participants' voting decisions were strongly influenced by their views on the position of Northern Ireland within the UK. Danuta voted for the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), a small party which currently has no seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly. She lived in what she described as a 'very staunch Protestant area' where she has developed friendships and feels safe. As well as

approving of the community work that she could see the PUP doing on the ground, she also considered their socialist ideological position (which also shaped her voting behaviour in Poland) and the fact that they support Northern Ireland remaining part of the Union:

I was thinking about who to vote for, and I chose a very small party which is called the PUP. Because this is a socialist, loyalist party, and I came here as a person who wanted to stay in the UK, not Ireland, so I would say I am a loyalist (laughs) as I discovered, logically just analysing my attitudes, so I voted for them.

When asked why she so felt strongly about Northern Ireland remaining part of the UK, she explained that her ties to Britain were not 'emotional' in the same way as her relationship to her home country, but she nevertheless felt strongly attached to 'Britishness' and British culture:

I cannot have any emotions, this is not the country where I was born, but my son is British. I mean he is Polish British, he has a British passport and he has a British passport for a purpose, so we didn't apply for an Irish passport and we are not going to do that. Because I really appreciate the UK, maybe it's because of my father, I really like the culture, I like certain attitudes of people, I like the sense of humour, I'm absolutely in love with writers. So I cannot say that I'm British, and I will never be, but there is a strong feeling towards Britishness as it is towards Polishness. I will always be Polish but I don't mind my son to say one day that he is Polish British because I really value the culture.

Parallels can be drawn with the story of Jakub, who lived in a working-class area of Belfast which is known for its ties to Irish Republicanism. He took a keen interest in local politics and observed that the majority of people in his area vote for Sinn Féin. He also expressed a strong commitment to Irish Republicanism, which was influenced by his identification as a 'Polish nationalist'. However, he found it difficult to reconcile his right-wing, conservative ideological position with his wish to see a United Ireland, given that Sinn Féin's policies sit on the left of the political spectrum. Although he was well-informed about party politics, this conflict of values meant that he felt he could not vote:

From the Polish point of view I'm a nationalist, therefore I'd like to see Ireland free from British occupation. But those [nationalist] organisations, like Sinn Féin and the Workers Party, are socialist and left-wing organisations. How can they represent Catholics, Christians, when they support anti-Christian, anti-Catholic projects? Sinn Féin is for a united Ireland, I also have that view, but for me the most important things are those deeper values like the family. Therefore with a clear conscience I couldn't vote for Sinn Féin. On the other hand there's the DUP, which is pro-British, they support more Christian values, therefore I'd be more likely to vote for the DUP. But I also can't vote for them with a clear conscience, because I know that they want NI to stay within the UK.

As illustrated by Jakub's comments above, several participants drew parallels with the history of Poland (as occupied by multiple foreign powers over several hundred years) and the occupation of Ireland by the British. Jakub was committed to upholding the sovereignty of the Polish state (which was reflected in a mistrust of supranational organisations such as the European Union) and his affiliation to this version of 'Polish nationalism' also translated into a desire to see Ireland as an independent country. He supported the DUP when it came to their conservative position on social issues (such as abortion and equal marriage) but he felt that he could not vote for them due to their stance on unionism.

As well as highlighting the complexity of migrants' decision-making processes and the ways in which they draw on multiple reference points to make sense of politics in their new place of residence, these examples also clearly demonstrate the role of place in shaping migrants' political affiliations. As Johnston and Pattie (2006; 2008) argue, political socialisation happens in places, and migrants are more likely to develop affiliations to parties and positions which they come into contact with on a regular basis. This does not only apply to parties' ideological positions and their broader policy platforms, but also to the more practical dimensions of party activities.

For example, Bożena gave her first preference vote in the 2014 local elections to a candidate from the DUP. She lives on a predominantly

Protestant housing estate on the outskirts of Belfast, with her husband (who is from a Protestant background in Northern Ireland) and their two children. She made her choice by observing the work of the candidates in the local area, rather than analysing the policies which they stood for. This formed the basis of her rationale for voting DUP, rather than her position on the constitutional question or the party's views on other issues such as immigration:

Before that they were coming around the houses and trying to, you know, convince you to vote for them, but you could really see, whenever you live on the estate you can see these people every day, nearly, and you see what they are doing. If someone just comes to your house and says 'vote for me' but you actually see that they are not doing anything for the estate, of course you're not going to vote for them. But there are a couple of good people, they made the park for kids, they planted trees and everything, so I was voting for them, because I saw that they were doing something.

Bożena left Poland when she was 18 and before she had the opportunity to vote in Polish elections, therefore the NI local elections in 2014 were her first ever experience of voting. Her opinion of Polish politicians was very negative, but she had a more positive view of politicians in Northern Ireland given the activities she had observed on the estate where she lived:

But here it is a lot better than in Poland anyway, easier life. I think here they are trying to help people as well, but in Poland they try to just put you under their shoe and that's it. They don't help you.

Iza also viewed politicians in NI as having much stronger connections to communities than they did in Poland:

No, it doesn't work that way really, as much. I think that here the politicians are more into society and the communication. Maybe it's better, and support, I can see the support, especially the extreme parties here (laughs) they have a very great support. It is kind of attached to the certain community, like the DUP is, really strong support, rather than in Poland, it's not as much, unless you want to be involved in politics and you start from the local level and you go up, but it's not very into people. It's, well this is way I see it, but it's my picture, you know, only partial, it's only from my experiences, it's not how it is in Poland, it's just the way I saw it and I experience it.

As many interviewees harboured a distrust of politicians, this often resulted in a focus on the activities of local candidates rather than consideration of parties' broader policy platforms. For example, Bartek wanted to support a candidate who focused on community work, regardless of their party affiliation. In his case this took precedence to ideological positions which had been formulated back in Poland, where he had developed conservative economic and social views. He lived in a predominantly Catholic area of Belfast where Sinn Féin has a strong presence and support base. Although he continued to support right-wing candidates through the use of his external vote in Polish elections, he voted for Sinn Féin in the most recent local elections in Northern Ireland. Unlike Jakub's case above, Bartek considered his voting decisions in Northern Ireland and in Polish elections as two separate domains. This is in line with findings from Lafleur and Sanchez-Dominguez (2014:21) which suggest that migrants may treat the home and host country political arenas entirely separately:

I: How did you decide to vote for them?

B: I just checked who is on the list, I checked his background, what he is offering, what his views are, and I just decided to vote for him.

I: And so which of his ideas did you like?

B: For the local elections, of course, his commitment to the local community is the most important thing you know. You know I don't really care about the politics in the local council elections, just that the guy can commit to the job.

In a similar way, Agata did extensive research on the candidates before deciding who to vote for. Election leaflets played some role in this but she was also keen to consider what representatives had done in practice, through checking their voting records and other activities online:

I was trying to approach it in a similar way as in Poland, trying to find out more about people. So I think the first round, you know, it was pretty much judging by whatever leaflets you get at home and trying to make up your mind, which, you know, you don't really

know what you are voting for. That's why I was even more disappointed [that her candidate didn't get elected] because I spent maybe a day or two going through different information about each candidate and just really noting down different things about them, if there was someone who was already involved in the past in the Assembly or something I was trying to find out through the Assembly website, what kind of voting, you know, what kind of committees he was involved in and what type of questions he was asking, just to know who I would like to represent me.

Several interviewees had personal encounters with candidates from political parties during canvassing for the most recent local elections in 2014. Given the fact that many communities in Northern Ireland are still segregated along ethno-nationalist lines (and people in Catholic communities are more likely to vote for nationalist parties, and those in Protestant communities are more likely to vote for unionist parties) the ways in which electoral boundaries are drawn (and the distribution of people (and their identities) within a particular area) are likely to shape parties' strategies at election time (Forest, 2008; Johnston and Pattie, 2006: 2008). In the interests of utility, consideration of the demographics of a place will help parties to decide where to focus their efforts. For example, the DUP is unlikely to canvass in a staunchly republican area, and, likewise, Sinn Féin is unlikely to canvass in a staunchly loyalist area. Instead, they will focus on the more marginal areas where there is likely to be the greatest electoral gain (see Pattie and Johnson 2000:45).

On a related point, if a migrant is living in an area where one particular party is dominant, they are more likely to see representatives of that party carrying out activities in the local area (and thus have the impression that those people are doing something positive). If a migrant has connections to a particular local area and people in that place, it follows that they might be more likely to vote similarly to the others around them (Johnston and Pattie, 2008; Pattie and Johnson, 2000). This has been reflected in the migrants' stories which have already been outlined in this chapter, where they tended to vote similarly to others in their neighbourhood. Although this theory has

considerable explanatory power when it comes to understanding migrants' voting patterns, it does not help to explain the cases where someone goes against the dominant voting patterns in their area. In order to consider this more fully, it is necessary to consider other influences on migrants' voting patterns (which may be related to other aspects of their identities).

One such factor regards the degree to which parties are seen to be receptive to the needs of migrants. During the interviews, there was some debate regarding the specific needs of migrants and how these might interlink with the needs of longer-term settled communities. Iwona argued that as Poles had settled down in Northern Ireland and lived there for a longer period of time, their needs had become similar to those of the longer-term settled population:

You know, a lot of Polish people have been now in Northern Ireland for quite a while. So initially, you know, newcomers would have different issues and different challenges to deal with, rather than when they get more established. So now a young Polish family will deal with challenges or issues which are, you know, sort of similar to the issues of the local community. So I think that the initial wave of people who were coming, who had to register, who had to find information, who had to integrate, we've passed that stage. However as the economy develops there will probably be new communities arriving again, you know, it's a part of globalisation.

Indeed, many interview participants were happy with their lives in Northern Ireland and often found it difficult to identify anything they would like to change. Nevertheless, despite the intersections between the issues of concern for both migrants and non-migrants (such as housing, schools, jobs, and healthcare) there are still particular issues which affect migrants disproportionately, such as racism and discrimination, exploitation in the labour market and difficulty in having qualifications recognised (see Wallace et al. 2013). This was reflected in survey responses when participants were asked to list the issues that they felt that the government in Northern Ireland should address. The most prominent theme in these responses was the need to

tackle racism and discrimination against Poles, most notably in the workplace. Another significant theme was the need to address sectarianism and to promote better relations among all communities in Northern Ireland, demonstrating the overlap between the issues affecting migrants and society more broadly. Several respondents expressed a desire for more integrated schooling, along with support for better healthcare and housing.

Although many respondents felt that a wide range of issues should be addressed by government, not just those affecting migrants or ethnic minorities specifically, several interviewees expressed a desire to support a party which was explicitly taking migrants' interests into consideration. As outlined in Chapter 4, all of the main political parties expressed commitments to support minority communities to some degree, although their manifesto commitments are not necessarily representative of what parties are doing on the ground. In addition, it was noted that although unionist parties make some positive statements about the benefits of immigration, these tend to be qualified with a focus on economic contribution and attracting the 'right kinds' of migrants. To the contrary, nationalist and 'other' parties tend to take a more positive tone on immigration and cultural diversity and are more explicit about the need to tackle racism and discrimination.

For some participants, having the interests of migrants at heart was equated with being 'neutral' (i.e. not being aligned with either unionist or nationalist politics). For example, Marek referred to the involvement of the Alliance party in taking a deciding vote in Belfast City Council to remove the Union Jack flag from the City Hall (and to fly it only designated days)⁵⁹. This impacted on his perception that the party is

⁵⁹ In December 2012, Belfast city councillors voted to limit the number of days that the Union Jack is flown on the city hall to 18 days a year (when it was previously flown daily). This decision led to months of (sometimes violent) protest which disrupted the city centre and provoked attacks on the Alliance party office in East Belfast. As nationalist party representatives voted for the change and unionists voted against, the

'neutral' and therefore works in favour of migrants (which he understood as the 'third' community in Northern Ireland).

If I voted here I have no idea which party I would choose, because none of them are very focused on the interests of foreigners. Maybe the Alliance party, but they have started to be more political than before, in the sense that they are not neutral. I always associated them with being a party more in the centre, which represents more than divides. However, they took that vote which tries to take sides.

From a more practical point of view, Iza saw the Alliance party as representing the interests of migrants based on the stories she had heard about the party employing a Polish speaker and assisting Polish people who needed help:

The Alliance is the only party more involved into minorities and more supportive and pro-future solutions and real peace solutions in this country, and I can really see their reach, because this is the only party being involved in minorities, I can see them trying to contact us, get to know us, they really try hard. So they employ Polish speakers, in case any Polish people would come with a problem, then they try to build the confidence, and help Polish people, if they have problems, to come and share. And if you come and share, I heard a lot of situations where people came to the Alliance office with a problem, a migrant, and asked for help. It's not empty, like you just ask and that's it, they really do something about it and they do it very quickly and they react very quickly to things, so it is very interesting to see.

However, it appeared that the Alliance party were not the only party who were reaching out to minorities, and that strategies to engage migrant communities were likely to vary from place to place. Based in Newry (a strongly nationalist city near the border with the Republic of Ireland), Janusz noted that Sinn Féin had strong support in the area and had been active in encouraging Polish residents to register to vote. Like Iza's comments above, he noted that the party were likely to have

Alliance party (as a party which designates as 'other') was seen as holding the balance of power. Consequently, councillors' decision to vote in favour of the proposal was the target of criticism and aggression.

attracted electoral support from newcomers because they offered practical help and advice to them:

Probably if you think about Polish people I would say that quite a number, if they go voting, they will go and vote for Sinn Féin. And they would vote Sinn Féin, because, for instance, Sinn Féin in the office, they have somebody always, I don't know if it was like on a Thursday, I don't remember now but there was always somebody that you could go there, you could tell about your problems and they listened to you. So from what I can hear, Sinn Féin was quite popular.

Some interviewees perceived unionist parties as uninterested in the needs of migrants or hostile towards them. However, representatives from these parties have also attempted to build relationships with Polish communities. For example, the UUP was involved in hosting a dinner at Stormont for visiting Polish MEPs, and Polish community representatives and DUP members both took part in events commemorating the Battle of Britain. As well as the creation of a joint mural (see Chapter 6), an event was held featuring talks from those involved in the project. At this event, senior representatives from the DUP praised the historical contribution made by Poles, as well as 'the economic, social and cultural contribution' which they continued to make in Northern Ireland in the present day (Fieldnotes, September 2015).

Moreover, even if unionist parties believe that immigration should be restricted they may still be active in supporting migrants and carrying out constituency work with them. In a survey of elected representatives across parties in Northern Ireland (which they compared with public opinion data from the NILT) McGarry et al. (2008) found that elected members of unionist parties were more liberal than party supporters when it came to their views on immigration policy. This tension between parties and their supporters was highlighted during a discussion with a unionist politician during an event aimed at local minority ethnic communities. Speaking over lunch, I told him about the topic of my research and he explained that he was a keen supporter of

the minority ethnic support organisation which was hosting the event. However, he also highlighted the tensions within the party and their electorate on the issue of immigration, as reflected in my fieldnotes below:

He told me that he personally liked multiculturalism and enjoyed learning about different cultures. He was at an event where he got talking to a Polish couple and he invited them to his office and advised them on some issues they were having. He said that he did not agree with the statement that they were taking the jobs of local people, because in his view they were taking the jobs that local people didn't want to do anyway. I explained about my research and that I was interested in migrants voting, and if political parties take minorities here into account when they are planning their campaign strategies. He said that although he is in favour of immigration, there are some people in the party who would be wary of being seen getting too close to migrant groups for fear of upsetting the local electorate. He told me that they had people going round the doors doing a survey on local issues, and every issue (jobs, schools, housing) came back to immigration. He said: 'There is a feeling that that they've only been here for 10 years, so are they going to vote for me, are they going to be loyal to me?' (Fieldnotes, March 2015).

The discrepancies between parties' manifesto commitments and the views of their members and supporters were also demonstrated through Julia's encounters with politicians prior to the local council elections in 2014. Julia lived in a predominantly Catholic area of Craigavon and worked for a local charity organisation which supported ethnic minority communities in the area. Through her work she had the opportunity to meet some local politicians and she decided to vote for a DUP candidate on this basis of one of these encounters:

I: Ok, so how did you make your decision about who to vote for?

J: Well actually, I would say that because I had a chance to speak with her [a DUP politician] and she was able to speak some Polish as well, not as good as you but she said she has a few Polish friends and she is really keen to go there for holidays and so, well, I just asked which party she is. And I gave them support.

Although Sinn Féin's manifestos were explicit about the need to tackle discrimination, Julia had a negative experience with one of their local candidates who canvassed where she lived:

J: I know that in my estate there is a very strong support for Sinn Féin but to be honest when I met the guy who came from Sinn Féin and he started talking I was like, he's talking such rubbish, I was like disappointed, really disappointed. I don't know if my accent is so good that he didn't realise that I'm Polish and I was disappointed whenever he started talking about immigrants.

I: And what did he say to you?

J: That actually it would be good to cut the level of immigrants living in local estates, and I was like oh, crap...

As Julia's experience highlights, a party's manifesto is a carefully crafted public statement but it does not reflect the breadth of opinion within the party and among its supporters. Although parties should be held to account based on the commitments they make, her story highlights the difficulty of labelling political parties as distinctly 'pro' or 'anti-immigration'. It also underlines the tensions in the political climate and the ways in which politicians may attempt to use the highly-charged issue of immigration to their political advantage. Although local councils (and indeed, the NI Assembly) have no power to restrict immigration to Northern Ireland, this candidate saw an opportunity to attract electoral support by scapegoating immigrants as responsible for local housing shortages.

Although many participants were keen to vote for candidates who they viewed as receptive to migrants' needs and who were positive about the benefits of immigration, tensions occasionally emerged between participants' own status as immigrants and their personal views on immigration policy. Waldek recounted a conversation where he expressed his own views that immigration to the UK should be reduced:

I spoke to people from Belfast about immigration in Belfast. They are from here, and I'm an immigrant, but we spoke about it. In my opinion, there is too much immigration, in general, to the UK. There

are too many immigrants and there are definitely problems starting to occur, in politics, in the politics of immigration. They cannot stop this. I heard somewhere that the UK government, they expected 100,000 Poles in the UK and perhaps 2 million have come up to this point, now that is a problem. I am Polish, but I have to say, that it's a problem, because they don't know what to do. And last year they opened the borders to Romania, Bulgaria and perhaps somewhere else, and again there will be a problem.

This highlights the salience of different aspects of migrants' identities and experiences in shaping their political views and affiliations. It also underlines how migrants may participate in creating hierarchies of deservingness in terms of who is a 'deserving' or 'undeserving' migrant (Anderson, 2013) (such as on the basis of contribution, race or nationality), rather challenging them. It therefore demonstrates the complexity of how migrants' political views are formed both within transnational spaces and in particular places, and how these influences intersect to produce distinctive sets of political attitudes and experiences for each person.

Conclusions

This chapter examined how Polish migrants develop political views and affiliations to political parties, taking into account both pre and post-migration influences. It illustrated the role of place in these processes, demonstrating the importance of attachments and identities at multiple scales in shaping migrants' political attitudes and practices. Moreover, it demonstrated that migrants' attitudes are formed in relation to multiple influences which stretch across the transnational social field, as well as being shaped by their embeddedness in particular places. It also outlined how attachments to localities shape political affiliations in both home and host country contexts, this further illustrating the need to 'rescale the polity' in order to take this into account. The chapter showed how migrants look for similarities or 'anchoring points' to help them make sense of their new surroundings and the new political

landscape. However, rather than allowing for the smooth transfer of political attitudes across borders, this may result in a type of 'cultural dissonance' when new beliefs and value systems are not congruent with those they held previously.

The empirical findings from this chapter challenged assumptions that Polish migrants will politically position themselves overwhelmingly alongside the Catholic, nationalist community due to their shared religious background. Although participants displayed a range of political viewpoints, there was a strong trend towards economic and social conservatism and a willingness to support unionist parties for that reason, although the perception that they were less receptive to immigrants could act as a dissuading factor. Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that some migrants were also keen to move beyond the traditional nationalist/unionist parties and to align themselves with parties whom they viewed as less closely associated with the conflict of the past. Nevertheless, we should not assume that the demographic changes brought about by migration will automatically result in the dilution of strong existing political identities. Indeed, political socialisation happens in places with their own social, political and historical characteristics, and newcomers may also become implicated in these dynamics through the development of their ties to place.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions

This thesis has argued for the need to pay closer attention to the ways in which migrants construct their belonging to civic and political communities, and how this shapes their civic and political participation in different places over time. It has emphasised how the characteristics of particular places shape migrants' political attitudes and interests, and how a sense of belonging to place influences their political engagement. The research has highlighted that belonging is situated at multiple scales, including the local, and it has outlined the need to 'rescale the polity' in order to recognise the role of local attachments in motivating civic and political participation. Furthermore, it has developed the notion of the 'place-based contract' to conceptualise the ways in which migrants develop their personal contracts with place and how this influences their civic and political activity.

This chapter brings together the key findings of the research, laying out both the conceptual and empirical contributions it has made. As well as highlighting the contributions to academic scholarship, it outlines how the findings may be relevant to policy-makers and practitioners who work with Polish migrants and other migrant groups. Moreover, it reflects on the changes in the political context which have taken place since the research began, and how these may influence the direction of future research on migration, politics and place.

Place, politics and developing the 'place-based contract'

Previous research has highlighted the ways in which movements across borders have produced new relationships between states and their citizens, interrogating how migrants may retain ties to multiple polities simultaneously (e.g. Baubock, 2010; Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004). The concept of political opportunity structure has been employed to illustrate how the institutions of the host society and the characteristics

of the particular group shape the extent and the nature of the civic and political activities which migrants engage in (e.g. Ireland, 1994; Odmalm, 2004). Whilst recognising the contribution made by these approaches, this thesis has argued for the need to recognise the role of place in shaping migrants' political engagements, opportunities and interests in a much more central manner. Place is about more than just formal institutions, but it is a dynamic entity constructed from complex social, political, cultural and economic relations (Massey, 1994:152). A sense of belonging to place involves both connections to the physical landscape and the social relationships which come with being embedded in a particular location at a particular moment in time. As the thesis has demonstrated, relationships to place persist across distances and emotional ties to place can be just as strong as more tangible and practical ones. Although citizenship (as a formal status) denotes legal belonging to a polity, belonging extends beyond having legal rights to also incorporate the social and emotional elements of feeling part of a particular place (see also Antonisch, 2010).

Moreover, exploring civic and political engagement through the lens of place allows us to move beyond the dichotomy of structure and agency in order to simultaneously consider how place plays a role in shaping migrants' experiences, and how they are actively engaged in shaping the fate of particular places. Place matters for politics, and political traditions and affiliations are often passed down through generations, but this does not equate to a determinism which precludes the possibility of change. In the case of Northern Ireland, the legacy of conflict still weighs heavily on the present, but this does not prevent newcomers from carving out a place for themselves and creating new narratives of place through their engagement with both the past and the present. As outlined in Chapter 5, participants in historical commemorations looked for ways of drawing parallels between the Polish historical experience and that of their new place of residence. While celebrating events such as Polish Independence Day, they

explored ways of making connections with other communities by emphasising their commonalities and instigating new kinds of shared experiences. This negotiation of 'similarity and difference' (Juul, 2011; 2014) was also present in the activities of Polish migrant organisations and Saturday schools, as they aimed to maintain Polish heritage whilst positioning themselves in relation to other national and cultural groups. The nature of these activities was shaped by place, as participants often took the specific context of Northern Ireland into consideration and attempted to position themselves accordingly. However, they were also a means through which migrants constructed both a collective and individual sense of belonging to place, and claimed a right to participation in the public sphere.

Furthermore, when considering migrants' involvement in formal politics, Chapters 6 and 7 demonstrated the importance of place in the development of political beliefs and attitudes. The chapters showed that migrants' political activities were often significantly influenced by where they lived and the people around them, as well as their own personal commitments to place. Their views are not shaped in a vacuum, but their perspectives, affiliations and identities are shaped and renegotiated in places. Rather than focusing solely on individual attributes (such as gender, age and class) and how these shape voting patterns, it is necessary to take account of the nature of places and their historical, economic and cultural attributes to gain a more nuanced understanding of migrants' participation in civic and political life.

Acknowledging the importance of place in shaping migrants' civic and political participation, this research has developed the notion of a 'place-based contract' as a means of conceptualising the relationship between migration, politics and place. Although Polish migrants to Northern Ireland have significant political rights, these alone are not sufficient for ensuring their participation in either home or host country contexts. To the contrary, migrants view their rights and duties of participation as part of a dynamic 'place-based contract' which is

situated at multiple scales, and is constantly being shaped and renegotiated in relation to their individual circumstances, interpersonal relationships and shifts in the wider political landscape. Moreover, the reconfiguration of identities which takes place within the migration experience may contribute to the development of new political views and affiliations, which in turn shapes the nature of migrants' civic and political engagements in particular (and often multiple) places.

This concept builds on existing work on citizenship, belonging and political participation, particularly Thomas' (2002) typology of claims to political belonging which conceptualises political membership as a type of contract between the citizen and the state. Although active participation (through tax-paying or community work) is not necessarily a criterion for political participation, the relationship between the citizen and the state is often presented in this way in debates about citizenship and nationality. This narrative is also particularly prevalent in the context of debates on immigration and regarding perceptions of the 'desirable' and 'undesirable' migrant (see Anderson, 2013). It is utilised by both those who stress the benefits of immigration (in relation to the economic contributions made by migrants) and those who argue for immigration to be restricted only to those who can contribute financially.

My research shows that migrants themselves are influenced by such debates, and that this rationale often impacts on how they conceive of and justify their own belonging to civic and political communities. Their 'contracts' with the polity are situated at multiple scales, not just at the level of the nation-state. Their personal, social and emotional attachments to place play an important role in shaping their sense of belonging, which in turn influences their civic and political participation. The 'place-based contract' helps us to conceptualise the development of these relationships through the lens of place, grounding them in particular local contexts rather than focusing solely on the relationship between the citizen and the nation-state. 'Rescaling the

polity' to accommodate a focus on the local allows us to give more adequate weight to the ways in which migrants' lives are lived locally, and how these experiences often act as a motivator and facilitator for civic and political activity beyond their relationship with the state.

As well as emphasising the central role of place in shaping migrants' political engagements and the ways in which identities at multiple scales influence their political affiliations and interests, the research also highlighted the need to pay closer attention to the role of emotions in migrants' political participation in both the home and the host country, and to consider the ways in which practical and emotional considerations intertwine to shape migrants' political behaviour in both contexts. The thesis has aimed to clarify and extend Baubock's idea of 'stakeholder citizenship' by recognising that emotional attachments and feelings of belonging are often an important driver of political participation, along with purely practical considerations about the potential future benefits to be derived from such activity. The findings showed that although Polish migrants have the right to electoral participation in both home and host country elections (regardless of their future plans), both the practical and emotional aspects of their personal 'place-based contracts' also have an important role to play in their decisions about voting, which are often fluid and open to shifting over time.

Analysing the political participation of migrants in Northern Ireland: empirical findings and implications for policy

As well as making these conceptual contributions, the research has produced a number of empirical findings which contribute to the existing body of work on migrants' civic and political engagement. It has also undertaken a detailed exploration of the civic and political activities of a particular migrant group in the context of Northern

Ireland, a topic about which little is currently known. As well as enhancing existing academic knowledge, these findings may also be of interest to practitioners, policy makers and other stakeholders who work with migrant groups, as well as the migrant organisations and individuals who contributed their views and experiences to the research.

Firstly, Chapter 5 highlighted that civil society in Poland has a different trajectory of development in comparison to Western Europe, and tends to be much weaker. Although some participants were involved in civil society organisations prior to emigration, they tended to be those who were younger and better-educated. The chapter outlined how the experience of communism had produced a lack of trust in mass organisations among many Poles and even trade unions (who were at the forefront of bringing about regime change) had a relatively small and declining membership. It emphasised the importance of being aware of this context when analysing Polish migrants' involvement in civil society, as a lack of previous experience often presents an initial barrier to civic engagement. Although this does not necessarily prevent Polish migrants from participating in civic life, it does mean that practitioners (such as community development workers or trade union organisers) may need to take a different approach in comparison to working with groups who may have greater previous experience of civil society engagement.

The chapter outlined that a slightly higher proportion of migrants were trade union members in Northern Ireland than had been members in Poland. However, their involvement in parent-teacher organisations, church organisations and sports clubs were all lower. The findings revealed a number of practical obstacles to civic engagement, including long working hours, unpredictable shift patterns and a lack of childcare options. Low levels of English proficiency, along with a lack of confidence to interact with the wider community, were also identified as considerable barriers to participation. As well as creating initiatives

which aim to reach out to migrants and encourage them to participate, these findings demonstrate the importance of addressing several interconnected issues, such as adequate English language provision, affordable childcare options and protecting rights at work. While a lack of time and energy to participate affects the population in general, it often affects migrants disproportionately as they tend to be concentrated in lower-skilled, lower-paid and less secure jobs.

Among those interviewed for the research, migrants who were the most actively engaged in civic life in Northern Ireland had high levels of English proficiency and had obtained more secure and regular hours of employment. For example, using the analogy of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Adam explained that he had to attend to his basic needs first before he could consider devoting time to wider social, cultural and political engagement (see Chapter 5). Although a few highly-skilled or educated participants had become involved in civil society activities upon arrival in Northern Ireland, they tended to be those who had transitioned quickly to stable employment or had initially arrived for another purpose (such as studying). Polish migrant organisations also tended to be led by more highly educated migrants who were proficient in English and had the skills to liaise with different groups, as they used their activities to build relationships with wider society. This highlights the need for policy-makers to reach out and consult with wider sections of migrant society, rather than assuming that the leaders of diaspora organisations are representative of all Poles.

Chapter 6 highlighted the influence of migrants' previous experiences on their continued voting behaviour in Polish elections. Although voting is a 'habit-forming' activity (Waldinger et al. 2012) and those who were committed voters in Poland were more likely to continue voting from abroad, some participants felt disillusioned with Polish politics which dissuaded them from further participation. Although there were high levels of distrust (and often anger) directed towards politicians, levels of interest in politics remained fairly high, with the majority of

participants following Polish political commentary on a regular basis. Inconvenience (including distance from the polling station and a lack of time) was the main reason given for not continuing to vote in Polish elections from abroad, rather than a lack of engagement with political issues. Although the Polish government has introduced a postal voting option in a bid to make external voting more convenient, participants tended to perceive the registration and voting process as inconvenient and time consuming.

This suggests that more could be done (both by Polish migrant organisations in Northern Ireland and the Polish state) to disseminate information about registration and voting procedures and publicise the option to vote via post. To date, efforts to publicise voting rights have mainly involved information distributed through the Polish embassy's website and on social media. However, my research has highlighted the impact of face-to-face conversations on voting behaviour, suggesting that this is a more effective way of encouraging voter turnout among the undecided. Polish migrant organisations could play a greater role in this, for example by organising events to discuss political party policies. They could also be more active in sharing information about voter registration and the option to vote by post at Polish Saturday Schools or other events, perhaps working in collaboration with the embassy. In addition, visits by more Polish political party candidates to Belfast could drum up more interest among migrants to exercise their external vote.

With regards to voting in local elections in Northern Ireland, only a fairly small proportion of participants said they had not voted because they were not interested in politics. The most common reason was a lack of knowledge of local politics/political parties (nearly half of survey respondents) followed by the failure to register on time and lack of awareness of voting rights. Although the majority of interviewees knew that they had some voting rights in Northern Ireland, many were unable to distinguish between the different types of elections they were

eligible to vote in, and even some of those who were well informed about politics were unaware of their voting rights in Northern Ireland Assembly elections. The majority of those who had voted in Northern Ireland were all fairly fluent in English, a necessary skill to gain understanding of the local political scene and the positions of the political parties.

As mentioned above, these findings highlight the importance of English language skills to enable migrants to participate fully in civic and political life. They also highlight that more could be done by local authorities, voluntary sector organisations and migrant organisations to inform migrants about their voting rights. Efforts to date have mainly been taken forward by the social media campaign 'Vote: You are at Home'. However, as highlighted above, face-to-face meetings and outreach initiatives are likely to be more effective in engaging those who feel removed from politics and apathetic towards voting. Such initiatives could be targeted in the period coming up to Northern Ireland Assembly elections, as the right to vote in these elections was less widely known among Polish migrants than the right to vote in the local council elections. In addition, political parties could also make more effort to reach out to migrant communities and communicate their party positions and policies, for example by employing more staff from ethnic minority backgrounds or translating election leaflets into other languages.

As highlighted throughout the thesis, the development of attachments to place and building relationships locally was an important element of migrants' motivations to participate in local elections. Participants also needed time to understand the complexities of the local political context and develop knowledge of parties in order to make informed voting decisions. As a result, voting was more common among those participants who had been in Northern Ireland for longer periods of time. The findings also highlighted how the development of collective identities at multiple scales influences migrants' voting behaviour.

While previous research has argued for the importance of identification with the polity (assumed to be the nation-state) as a necessary condition for migrants' political engagement (e.g. Scuzzarello, 2015a), my research found that local identities and feelings of belonging had a stronger influence on migrants' motivations to participate. The findings also highlighted that local identities (i.e. feeling part of the local life of the town or city) could co-exist with identities at different scales, such as feeling Polish or European, and that the presence of multiple identities did not act as a barrier to civic or political engagement. These findings are of relevance to policymakers who aim to gain a deeper understanding of processes of migrant integration and belonging. Policy-making tends to focus on the need to strengthen migrants' sense of belonging towards the state (such as the focus on 'British values' (Uberoi and Modood, 2013) but the importance of local and multiple identities should be taken more fully into consideration.

Chapter 7 also outlined how voting decisions in local elections were shaped in relation to feeling a part of local, rather than national, communities. It highlighted the influence of the family in shaping early voting decisions, and emphasised how migrants' previously held political views affect the development of new political affiliations in the receiving society. A minority of survey respondents declared support for a political party in Northern Ireland, although more than a third reported that they had voted in an election in Northern Ireland at least once. Participants showed a slight preference towards voting for parties designated as 'other' and nationalist parties, and a lesser preference for supporting unionist parties. However, the findings highlighted that there was no one party strongly favoured by Polish migrants, and that different aspects of their identities and experiences influenced their political views. Furthermore, the findings highlighted the importance of place in shaping these political preferences, as friends, neighbours and direct contact with parties all had a strong influence on voter choice. Moreover, local concerns were often a key factor in voting decisions,

rather than parties' broader policy platforms, which has relevance to wider work on political participation and voter decision-making.

Although some participants explicitly avoided voting for parties which they saw as prioritising irrelevant 'Green and Orange' issues, others developed their own positions on the constitutional question which played a role in their voting patterns. As well as conversations with neighbours, acquaintances and friends, direct contact with parties through canvassing and local activity also played an important role in influencing their voting behaviour. This demonstrates that although new forms of political organisation are emerging, and political parties have a wider range of tools at their disposal in order to mobilise potential voters, face-to-face contact between people and parties in places remains a key element of political organisation and a means of garnering support (see also Johnson and Pattie, 2008).

Although the research did not specifically focus on the attitudes of political parties towards migrants, analysis of party manifestos in Chapter 4 demonstrated that all parties had made some commitments in this regard, and that the issues affecting ethnic minority and migrant communities were much more prominent on the political agenda than they had been in the past. However, this analysis also demonstrated that nationalist parties and parties designated as 'other' tended to be more explicit regarding their commitments to promoting diversity and recognising the benefits of immigration, in comparison to the unionist parties⁶⁰. This conclusion was echoed by a number of participants who saw unionist parties in general as more hostile towards immigrants, partly due to the prevalence of hate crime within loyalist areas, and the feeling that these parties had to tread a fine line in order to keep certain sections of their electorate on board.

⁶⁰Although the analysis demonstrated that positions varied between unionist parties and their statements on immigration have shifted over time.

The research did not gather views from political party representatives directly, but an informal conversation with a local politician confirmed this suspicion and highlighted the potential tensions within political parties regarding immigration. This raises further questions about the gaps between parties' views and that of their electorates, and the communication between parties and electorates on these issues. It also highlights the difficulty of conducting research on political party attitudes, as methods such as surveys or interviewing are quite likely to yield uncontroversial responses which reflect the official party line. It should also be noted that several participants lived in loyalist areas and had very positive experiences with their neighbours and those around them. This indicates that the political views of loyalist communities are likely to be more much complex than simply 'pro' or 'anti-immigration', and that care should be taken to avoid overgeneralisations and stigmatisation of particular groups.

The research also found that migrants may hold views on immigration which come into conflict with their status as immigrants in the receiving society. This is one way in which a type of 'cultural dissonance' comes into play and, as highlighted in Chapter 5, 'othering' of other national or religious groups is one way in which they may cope with this. This is also an example of how views developed in the home country may come into conflict with their experiences in the receiving society, and not make for easy reconciliation. With regards to their wider political views and affiliations to political parties, the empirical material highlighted that migrants often try to make sense of the new context in relation to their previous experiences back home, highlighting the importance of considering their experiences in both home and host country contexts. They may look for 'anchoring points' such as parties with similar ideological positions to those they supported back home, or draw parallels with familiar historical reference points to make sense of the history of conflict in Northern Ireland.

On the whole, paying attention to the particular context of Northern Ireland has enabled an understanding of the ways in which its specific socio-political context influences migrants' experiences of civic and political participation. As Julia's story illustrated (see Chapter 5) an initial lack of confidence to engage with wider society could be exacerbated by Northern Ireland's status as a post-conflict society, and the feeling that mixing with the wider community was not safe. However, the research also highlighted that civic participation could be a site of confidence building for migrants, as well a way of developing wider social relationships and achieving occupational mobility. Although the notoriety of Northern Ireland's history often sparked an initial curiosity among newcomers, the sense that politicians were 'stuck in the past' or preoccupied with irrelevant issues could act as a disincentive to getting engaged in formal politics. Furthermore, the particularity of the political landscape (often dominated by debates related to the constitutional question and clashing cultural identities) could make it more difficult for migrants to form affiliations with parties and feel that their interests were being represented. This also had an impact on migrants' learning about the political situation, as the sensitivity of the issues made it more difficult to discuss politics with local people before they had developed close relationships.

Nevertheless, the research findings demonstrated that migrants were motivated to participate in civic and political life when they had developed a sense of attachment to place and felt a sufficient degree of belonging to the political community. Similarly to their participation in the Polish case (where many felt disillusioned with politics, but yet some continued to vote), some participants felt that they had a duty to vote in Northern Ireland even if they found it difficult to choose a particular party or candidate. Therefore, while focusing on what could be considered as a rather unique context, the research has drawn out a number of findings which have wider application beyond the specific case.

Reflecting on these findings, a number of directions can be identified for future research. Firstly, this research has focused on the attitudes and experiences of Polish migrants, but scope remains for further work which considers the civic and political engagement of other migrant groups in Northern Ireland. While the experiences of Polish migrants to the UK have been explored in detail since 2004, those of other A8 migrant groups (such as Lithuanians) have received less research attention. In addition, the research has identified the importance of 'local' community attitudes and those of other organisations (such as political parties) in negotiating migrants' sense of belonging. Further research could aim to examine the views of and the interplay between these groups, rather than focusing solely on migrants' views and experiences.

Moreover, in looking ahead it is important to recognise the shifting political landscape for Polish migrants and other EU migrants in the UK, which has rapidly evolved since this research was carried out. In June 2016, the UK voted in a referendum to leave the European Union. Although the population of Northern Ireland (along with that of Scotland) voted in favour of remaining part of the EU, the UK is currently in negotiations to terminate its membership. Since the outcome of the referendum was announced, a key topic for debate has been the rights of EU citizens living in the UK. Although the Home Office has recently announced an online registration system for EU citizens in the UK, and offered assurances that no one currently legally resident in the country will be asked to leave, the situation has introduced a considerable amount of uncertainty for EU citizens. As this research has highlighted, legal rights are only one aspect of promoting a sense of belonging among migrants, but they are nonetheless a significant one. Although obtaining UK citizenship was not a priority for the majority of my research participants (and many stressed that they could not afford it) it has been reported that there has recently been a rise in the

numbers of Poles seeking to obtain a UK passport in order to ensure their legal status.

As well as the presence of uncertainty over their legal position, the referendum result has also introduced an element of uncertainty about the degree to which migrants are welcome in the UK. There was a spike in the number of race-hate crimes recorded in England and Wales following the referendum result (Home Office, 2017), although this trend was not reflected in Northern Ireland (PSNI, 2017). Although there have not yet been any practical changes, this shift in mood and increase in visible animosity is already having a marked impact on migrants' lives. On the one hand, it may make migrant groups more reluctant to engage with politics, but on the other, it may give them an impetus to participate politically in order to defend their rights. Whatever the direction, it is likely that questions relating to migration, politics and place, as well as citizenship and belonging, will become even more pertinent in the years to come.

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Appendix A: Participant information form



Information for participants

The civic and political participation of Poles in Northern Ireland

I would like to invite you to take part in this research project. You should only agree to take part if you want to, it is entirely up to you. If you choose not to take part there will not be any disadvantages for you. Please read the following information carefully before you decide to take part; this will tell you why the research is being done and what you will be asked to do. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

This study aims to explore the civic and political participation of Polish people living in Northern Ireland. You are being asked to participate in one interview of approximately one hour in length, which will take place at a time and location of your convenience. This will involve some questions regarding your experience of everyday life in Northern Ireland, your views on politics and participation in civil society, and your experiences of participating in such activities in Northern Ireland, Poland and other places where you have previously lived. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to.

The interview will be recorded and later transcribed. All recordings and transcripts will be stored securely in a password protected file. Your contributions will remain anonymous in all future publications through the use of pseudonyms. If you agree to be quoted, a pseudonym will be used. While your contributions will be anonymous, I do have a duty to report certain forms of illegal activity, therefore please do not

discuss criminal matters with me. Should I feel that the conversation is moving in this direction, I will have to terminate the interview.

As well as a PhD thesis, the findings of the research will be used to publish in academic journals and to write a summary report which will be widely distributed both in Polish and in English. This will focus on Polish migrants' experiences of civic and political participation and any barriers to participation that they may experience.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

If you have any questions or concerns about the manner in which the study was conducted please, in the first instance, contact the researcher responsible for the study: Jenny McCurry - j.c.mccurry@qmul.ac.uk

If this is unsuccessful, or not appropriate, please contact the Secretary at the Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee, Room W117, Queen's Building, Mile End Campus, Mile End Road, London or research-ethics@qmul.ac.uk.

Appendix B: Participant consent form



Consent form

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: The civic and political participation of Poles in Northern Ireland

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organizing the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part.

If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to participate. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

I understand that if I decide at any other time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researcher involved and be withdrawn from it immediately.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Participant's Statement:

I _____ agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Signed: Date:

Investigator's Statement:

I Jennifer McCurry confirm that I have carefully explained the nature, demands and any foreseeable risks (where applicable) of the proposed research to the volunteer.

Signed: _____ Date _____

Appendix C: Semi-structured interview schedule

Personal details and background

Can you tell me something about yourself?

Where are you from in Poland? (Can you describe the place?)

How long have you lived in Northern Ireland?

Where exactly do you live in Northern Ireland? (How would you describe the place?)

Have you lived abroad before coming to Northern Ireland? (If yes, can you give more details?)

Why did you decide to leave Poland?

Why did you come to Northern Ireland?

Where do your family members live (e.g. Poland, Northern Ireland, both)?

What do you do here (e.g. work, looking after children/grandchildren)?

What did you do before you arrived in Northern Ireland?

Experiences of everyday life

Can you tell me about your everyday experience of living in Northern Ireland?

Are there any positive/negative aspects?

Do you own or rent your house/flat?

Can you describe your experience of interacting with local people? (e.g. work, relationships, friendships, neighbours).

Can you describe your group of friends? (mostly Polish, local, from other countries?)

Can you describe your experience of accessing services (e.g. doctor, dentist, job centre, advice services, school)?

What are your views on/experiences of bringing up children in Northern Ireland? (e.g. choosing schools, educational support).

What did you know about the history and politics of Northern Ireland before you arrived? (e.g. conflict, divisions between Catholics and Protestants)

Does this affect your life in any way?

Engagement and interest in 'informal' politics.

Now I would like to talk about the time before you moved to Northern Ireland (living in Poland or in other countries).

Did you belong to any NGOs/ community groups /volunteering projects/a church/trade union/ in Poland/ in other countries you have lived?

If yes, what kinds of activities did you participate in?

If yes, how did you become involved in these activities?

Why (or why not) did you become involved in these activities/groups?

Now I would like to talk about your experiences in Northern Ireland.

Have you been involved in any NGOs/community groups/volunteering projects/a church/trade union since arriving in Northern Ireland?

If yes, what kind of activities do you participate in?

If yes, how did you become involved in these activities?

Why (or why not) did you become involved in these activities/groups?

These questions refer to your experiences in all the places where you have lived.

Have you ever attended a public protest or demonstration? (Where, for what cause)

Have you ever signed a petition? (If yes, on what issues)

Involvement and interest in 'formal' politics.

When you lived in Poland, were you interested in politics?

What forms of media did you use to follow political commentary? (TV, newspapers social media, online forums) and how often?

How often did you discuss politics with friends or family?

Were you a member of a particular political party in Poland?

Did you support a particular political party in Poland?

Did you vote in Polish elections (presidential, parliamentary, local government)?

Follow-up to these questions: why, why not? If you voted, can you describe your experience of going to vote and how you felt about it?

How did you decide which party to vote for?

Have you ever contacted a politician in Poland? (through email, phone call, letter writing, requesting a meeting, responding to a government consultation?)

Continuing participation in Polish politics

What forms of media do you use to follow political commentary in Poland? (TV, newspapers social media, online forums) and how often?

Do you currently support a particular political party in Poland?

Have you voted in a Polish election since moving to Northern Ireland?

Do you intend to vote in the Polish elections this autumn (2015)? (Why/Why not?)

Interest and involvement in politics in Northern Ireland

Are you interested in politics in Northern Ireland?

What forms of media do you use to follow political commentary in NI/UK/other countries? (TV, newspapers, social media, online forums) and how often?

How often do you discuss politics with friends or family?

Are you a member of a particular political party in Northern Ireland?

Do you support a particular political party in Northern Ireland?

To your knowledge, which elections do you have the right to vote for in Northern Ireland?

Have you ever voted in local government elections in Northern Ireland?

Have you ever voted in an NI Assembly election? (Why, why not? If you voted, can you describe your experience of going to vote and how you felt about it?)

If you voted, how did you decide which party to vote for?

Have you ever contacted a politician in Northern Ireland? (e.g. through email, phone call, letter writing, requesting a meeting, responding to a government consultation?)

Have you ever considered running for political office in Northern Ireland?

More generally, are you interested in political developments in the UK/Republic of Ireland? Why/why not?

Unless you have British citizenship, you don't have the right to vote in elections to the Westminster parliament. How do you feel about that?

Interest and involvement in EU politics

Do you follow EU politics?

What are your views on the European Union?

Have you ever voted to elect candidates to the European Parliament? (Why/why not?)

If you voted, was this in Poland/in other countries/in Northern Ireland?

If you voted in the last elections (2014) did you choose to vote for a Polish candidate or a candidate standing in Northern Ireland (i.e. did you register to vote in Poland or in NI)?

Identity and Citizenship

How would you describe your identity?

Have your feelings about these identities changed since you moved to Northern Ireland? If yes, how.

Is it important for you that your children speak Polish/learn about Polish culture? (if applicable)

Where do you think of as home?

Do you have a passport from a country other than Poland?

Would you like to acquire British citizenship (Why/why not?)

Plans for the future and recommendations for action

Do you plan to stay in Northern Ireland in the future? (Why/ why not?)

Would you like to change anything about your life in Northern Ireland?

How do you think that Polish people living in Northern Ireland could be supported to engage in political and civic life?

Would you like to say anything else?

Appendix D: Online survey

Survey: The political and civic participation of Polish people in Northern Ireland

Introduction

This survey is part of a research project that I am carrying out at Queen Mary, University of London. It contains questions for Poles in Northern Ireland about their interest and participation in politics and civil society in both Northern Ireland and Poland.

Participants should be Polish citizens, at least 18 years old and be living in Northern Ireland for at least a year (at the time of completing the survey). The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. It is not necessary to be interested in politics in order to participate. Your contribution will be anonymous.

At the end of the survey you will have the option to enter a prize draw by giving your email address. When the survey closes on 31st of July 2015, 3 winners selected at random will receive One4all gift vouchers. These can be used in over 17,000 shops including Argos, Amazon, B&Q and Currys. 1st prize = £50 voucher; 2nd prize = £30 voucher; 3rd prize = £20 voucher.

You can find more information here:

<http://www.one4allgiftcard.co.uk/retailer.html>

The findings of the survey will be used for my PhD thesis and to publish in academic journals. I will also write a summary report which will be widely distributed in both Polish and in English. This will be used to build up a picture of the political and civic participation of Polish migrants in Northern Ireland which could be of interest to individuals or organisations working with Polish migrants.

If you have any questions about the survey or the research project, please contact me by email (j.c.mccurry@qmul.ac.uk).

Your participation in this research project is much appreciated. Thank you very much for your time and interest.

You can find more information about me and my research here:

<http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/staff/mccurryj.html>

Section 1: Interest and involvement in Polish politics

1. How often do you follow Polish political commentary in newspapers/on TV/through social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.)?

Daily

A few times a week

A few times a month

Rarely

Never

2. How often do you discuss Polish politics with your friends/family?

Daily

A few times a week

A few times a month

Rarely

Never

3. Are you a member of a particular political party in Poland?

Yes

No

- 3a. If yes, please state which one: (open text)

4. Do you support a particular political party in Poland?

Yes

No

Not sure

4a. If yes, please state which one: (open text)

5. Have you ever voted in a Polish election?

Yes

No

5a. If not, why not? Please choose one answer which is most relevant to you:

At the time of the last election I wasn't 18 years old

I didn't register on time

I'm not interested in politics

No party represents me

Other

5ai. If other, please state: (open text)

6. How often have you voted in Polish elections during your time living in Northern Ireland? Please pick one answer which best describes you:

Every time I had the opportunity

Sometimes

I voted at the beginning of my stay in Northern Ireland, but I stopped after some time

Never, because I'm not interested in politics

Never, because at the time of the last election I wasn't 18 years old

Never (for another reason, please state below)

6a. If you answered 'never' (for another reason) please state: (open text)

7. Did you vote in the 1st round of the Polish Presidential elections this year (May 2015)?

Yes

No

7a. If yes, who did you vote for? (open text)

8. Did you vote in the second round of the Polish presidential elections this year (May 2015)?

Yes

No

8a. If yes, who did you vote for? (open text)

9. Did you vote in the Polish parliamentary elections in October 2015?

Yes

No

9a. Why/why not? (open text)

9ai. If yes, who did you vote for? (open text)

Section 2: Interest and involvement in Northern Irish and UK politics

10. How often do you follow in newspapers / on TV / through social media (for example Facebook, Twitter) commentary on UK politics (what happens in the Westminster Parliament)?

Daily

A few times a week

A few times a month

Rarely

Never

11. How often do you follow in newspapers / on TV / through social media (for example Facebook, Twitter) commentary on Northern Ireland politics (what happens in local politics)?

Daily

A few times a week

A few times a month

Rarely

Never

12. How often do you discuss UK politics with your friends or family?

Daily

A few times a week

A few times a month

Rarely

Never

13. How often do you discuss Northern Ireland politics with your friends or family?

Daily

A few times a week

A few times a month

Rarely

Never

14. Are you a member of a political party in Northern Ireland?

Yes

No

14a. If yes, please state which one: (open text)

15. Do you support a particular political party in Northern Ireland?

Yes

No

15a. If yes, please state which one: (open text)

16. Are you registered to vote in Northern Ireland?

Yes

No

Don't know

17. To your knowledge, which of these elections in Northern Ireland do you have the right to vote in? Please select the correct answer.

a) Local government Y N Don't know

b) NI Assembly Y N Don't know

c) UK Parliament Y N Don't know

d) European Parliament Y N Don't know

Section 3: Voting in Northern Ireland

18. Have you ever voted in an election in Northern Ireland?

Yes

No

18a.If not, why not?

I wasn't aware that I had the right to vote in Northern Ireland

I wasn't registered on time

I'm not interested in politics

I don't have enough knowledge of politics and political parties in Northern Ireland.

No party represents me

I think that only citizens of the UK and Ireland should have the right to vote in Northern Ireland.

Other

18ai. If 'other' please state (open text)

19. Did you vote in the last European Parliament election (May 2014)?

Yes (for a candidate in Northern Ireland)

Yes (for a candidate in Poland)

No, I was not living in Northern Ireland at the time.

No (for another reason)

20. Did you vote in the last local government election (May 2014)?

Yes

No, I was not living in Northern Ireland at the time.

No (for another reason)

20a. If yes, which party did you vote for?

Alliance Party

Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)

Green Party

Progressive Unionist Party (PUP)

Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)

Sinn Féin

Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV)

UK Independence Party (UKIP)

Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)

I don't remember

Other

20ai. If 'other' please state (open text)

21. Did you vote in the last Northern Ireland Assembly election (May 2011)

Yes

No, I was not living in Northern Ireland at the time.

No (for another reason)

21a. If yes, which party did you vote for?

Alliance Party

Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)

Green Party

Progressive Unionist Party (PUP)

Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)

Sinn Féin

Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV)

UK Independence Party (UKIP)

Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)

I don't remember

Other

21ai. If 'other' please state: (open text)

22. Do you intend to vote in the next NI Assembly election (2016)?

Yes

No

Don't know

22a. Why / why not? (open text)

23. Have you ever considered running for political office in Northern Ireland?

Yes

No

23a. If yes, please give more details: (open text)

Section 4: Participation in civil society

24. In Poland, were you ever involved with the following organisations?

Please tick all that apply:

Local community organisation

Trade union

International campaigning organisations (e.g. Oxfam, Greenpeace etc.)

Parent/teacher association

Church organisation

Sports club

24a. Other, please state: (open text)

24b. Are you still involved with any of the above named organisations in Poland?

Yes

No

24c. Please give more details if applicable (open text)

25. Have you been involved with any of the following organisations since moving to Northern Ireland?

Local community organisation (specifically for Poles)

Local community organisation (not specifically for Poles)

Trade union

International campaigning organisations (e.g. Oxfam, Greenpeace etc.)

Parent/teacher association, school board etc.

Church organisation

25a. Other, please state:

25b. Please give more details if applicable: (open text)

Section 4: About you

26. What is your gender?

Female

Male

27. How old are you? (open text)

28. Where are you from in Poland? (Town/city): (open text)

29. Where do you live in Northern Ireland? (Town/city): (open text)

30. How long have you lived in Northern Ireland (Please round it up to the nearest year): (Options given to select the number of years).

31. What is the highest level of education that you have achieved?

Basic (Primary)

Intermediate (Secondary)

Bachelors

Masters

PhD

32. How would you describe your level of English?

Basic

Satisfactory

Good

Very good

Fluent

33. What is your current occupation? (open text)

34. Do you have children under 18 years old?

Yes

No

34a. If yes, where do they live?

In Northern Ireland

In Poland

Elsewhere

35. Please select the option which best describes you:

I most often work with people from Northern Ireland

I most often work with Poles

I most often work with people of varying nationalities

36. Please select the option which best describes you

I spend most of my free time with people from Northern Ireland

I spend most of my free time with Poles

I spend most of my free time with people of varying nationalities

37. Which passport(s) do you hold? Please tick all that apply.

Polish

British

Passport of another country (Please state): (open text)

38. If you do not currently hold a British passport, do you intend to apply for one in the next 5 years?

Yes

No

Don't know

38a. Why or why not? (open text)

39. How long do you intend to stay in Northern Ireland?

Indefinitely

For less than 2 years

For the next 2 – 5 years

For the next 5 – 10 years

For the next 10 + years

Not sure

40. In your opinion, which issues should be addressed by politicians in Northern Ireland?

End page

Thank you very much for completing this survey. Your participation is much appreciated.

Would you like to enter into the prize draw to win One4all gift vouchers? (1st prize £50, 2nd prize £30, 3rd prize £20). If yes, please enter your email address. The draw will take place when the survey has closed.

Last page

Information about voting rights

As EU citizens, Polish citizens in Northern Ireland have the right to vote in local government elections, Northern Ireland Assembly elections and European Parliament elections. In European Parliament elections they can vote for a candidate in Northern Ireland or in Poland, but they can vote only once.

The next elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly are due to take place in 2016. The next local council and European Parliament elections are due to take place in 2019.

Więcej informacji możesz znaleźć tutaj:

<http://www.eoni.org.uk/>

<http://www.eoni.org.uk/Register-To-Vote/Forms-in-other-Languages>

Appendix E: Details of research participants

Name	Gender	Age	Time living in NI	Education	Level of English	Occupation in Poland	Occupation in NI	Marital status	Location
1. Ania	F	29	3 years	MA	Fluent	University Student	Interpreter and MA student	Cohabiting	Belfast
2. Grzegorz	M	41	8 years	Secondary school (technical)	Basic	Mechanic	Mechanic	Married with 2 children	Newtown abbey
3. Alina	F	22	4 months	BA	Good	Student	Factory worker (agency)	Co-habiting	Belfast
4. Edyta	F	31	9 years	MA	Very good	Student	Shop supervisor	Single	Belfast

5. Bożena	F	28	9 years	A level equivalent	Very good	School pupil	Stay at home parent	Married with 2 children	Newtown abbey
6. Damian	M	33	10 years	MA	Fluent	Student	Consultant	Co-habiting	Belfast
7. Waldek	M	27	1 year	MA	Very good	Ran own business	Coffee shop manager	Single	Belfast
8. Roman	M	41	10 years	BA & professional qualification	Fluent	IT consultant	IT consultant	Single	Carrick fergus
9. Natalia	F	28	8 years	Matura (A level equivalent)	Fluent	Student (left studies)	Cafe manager	Married with 2 children	Belfast
10. Marek	M	32	8 years	MA	Fluent	Student	Mortgage advisor	Married with a child	Belfast
11. Maciek	M	34	10 years	Secondary school (technical)	Intermediate	Mechanic	Self-employed painter and decorator	Co-habiting	Antrim

12. Teresa	F	27	7 years	A level equivalent	Very good	Various jobs in hospitality and retail	Waitress	Co-habiting	Newtown abbey
13. Danuta	F	42	6 years	MA	Fluent	University lecturer	Community development worker	Lives with partner and son	Belfast
14. Dominik	M	33	1 month	A level equivalent	Good	In the army	Looking for a job	Single	Belfast
15. Hania	F	19	5 months	A level equivalent	Basic	School pupil	Kitchen porter	Co-habiting	Belfast
16. Marzena	F	28	6 years	A level equivalent	Basic	Waitress	Stay at home parent	Married with 2 children	Belfast

17. Dorota	F	34	9 years	MA	Fluent	Student	Family support worker	Married with a child	Belfast
18. Mateusz	M	34	10 years	BA	Fluent	Teacher	Part-time postal worker and full-time MA student	Single	Belfast
19. Iwona	F	40s	15 years	MA	Fluent	Student	Business woman	Not known	Belfast
20. Arleta	F	29	1 year	MA	Good	Civil Servant	Office Administrator	Co-habiting	Belfast
21. Ela	F	18	10 years	A levels	Fluent	School pupil	Full-time undergraduate student.	Single	Coleraine
22. Julia	F	40s	8 years	A level equivalent	Very good	Book-keeper	Admin Assistant	Single with 3 children	Craigavon

23. Iza	F	37	7 years	MA	Fluent	Private sector manager	Teacher at a Polish Saturday School and of Polish as a foreign language	Married with 2 children	Belfast
24. Paweł	M	Mid to late 30s	10 years (but spent several years in Asia during that time)	MA	Fluent	Student	ESOL teacher	Married	Coleraine
25. Agata	F	42	10 years	MA	Fluent	Teacher	Interpreter	Married with children	Lisburn
26. Lena	F	40	7 years	MA	Fluent	Teacher	Childcare assistant and teacher at Polish Saturday School	Married with a child	Craigavon

27. Igor	M	39	7 years	MA	Fluent	Teacher	ESOL teacher	Married with a child	Craigavon
28. Basia	F	30	7 years	MA	Fluent	Student	Journalist, receptionist and English teacher.	Co-habiting	Belfast
29. Alicja	F	30	8 years	MA	Fluent	Student	Community development worker	Single	Derry/Londonderry
30. Justyna	F	33	9 years	MA	Fluent	Student	Interpreter	Married with a child	Craigavon
31. Adam	M	35	10 years	MA	Fluent	Admin assistant	Export executive	Married with children	Lisburn
32. Bartek	M	40	10 years	Secondary school (technical)	Very good	Lorry driver	Lorry driver	Married with children	Belfast

33. Emilia	F	Mid 30s	9 years	MA	Fluent	Student	Architect	Co-habiting	Newry
34. Janusz	M	56	10 years	MA	Fluent	University lecturer	Migrant support worker	Married with children	Newry
35. Piotr	M	31	6 years	MA	Fluent	Student	Full-time student	Single	Belfast
36. Aneta	F	28	9 years	A level equivalent	Fluent	School pupil	Interpreter and undergraduate student	Married	Moirra
37. Martyna	F	40	8 years	BA	Fluent	IT consultant	Customer service executive		Newtown abbey
38. Szymon	M	32	10 years	A level equivalent	Fluent	Student (left studies)	Unemployed	Single	Belfast

39. Jakub	M	34	10 years	Secondary school (technical)	Fluent	College student	Chef	Co-habiting	Belfast
40. Magda	F	40s	11 years	MA	Fluent	Teacher and cultural diversity consultant	Migrant support worker	Married with children	Newry
41. Halina	F	Mid 30s	10 years	PhD	Fluent	Student	Librarian	Single	Belfast